

NEWSLETTER

4th SUNDAY
EASTER**MASS INTENTIONS****May 2, 2020**

6pm - Ints of sick and house-bound of our Parish/ those suffering of coronavirus and all healthcare workers

May 3, 2020

11am— People of the Parish

For weekday mass intentions please, see the notice board on the left hand side of the main door of the church.

The church remains closed but masses continue to be offered behind the closed door.***Parish Office remains open.******Please, contact us in case of any problem caused by the lockdown. We got a team of healthy people ready to help.*****The Voice of the Good Shepherd**

Christ is the Good Shepherd; he calls his sheep by name and leads them forth. We, his flock, know his voice and we share his concern to gather his people together, to lead them on the way of salvation. Let yourselves be summoned by the love of Christ; recognise his voice which rings in the temple of your heart. Receive his luminous and penetrating glance which opens the paths of your life upon the horizons of the mission of the Church, today more than ever committed to teaching man his true being, his end, his destiny, and to revealing to faithful souls the unspeakable riches of the love of Christ. Have no fear of the fact that the response he requires is radical, because Jesus, who has first loved you, is ready to give what he asks of you. If he asks much it is because he knows that you can give much. Young People, give the Church a hand in the task of saving the world of youth. React against the culture of death by means of the culture of life.

Lord, Jesus Christ, Good Shepherd of our souls, you who know your sheep and know how to reach man's heart, open the minds and hearts of those, who search for and await a word of truth for their lives; let them understand that only in the mystery of your Incarnation do they find full light; arouse the courage of those who know where to seek the truth, but fear that what you ask will be too demanding; stir the heart of those who would follow you, but who cannot overcome doubts and fears, and who in the end follow other voices and other paths which lead nowhere. You who are the Word of the Father, the Word which creates and saves, the Word which enlightens and sustains hearts, conquer with your Spirit the resistance and delays of indecisive hearts; arouse in those whom you call the courage of love's answer: *Here I am, send me!* (Is 6:8).

Virgin Mary, young daughter of Israel, support with your motherly love those whom the Father will grant that they hear his voice, Let them repeat with you the yes of a joyful and irrevocable gift of self. Amen

*St. John Paul***The Holy Rosary**

The Holy Father, Pope Francis has reminded us all to say the Rosary during the month of May. Especially, for all the Health Care Workers, in Hospitals, Care Homes, and those front line workers we remember them when we say the Rosary this month and end to the pandemic.

Vocations Sunday /Priest's Training Fund

Good Shepherd Sunday is when we pray for our seminarians who are studying at Allen Hall, English College Rome, and the Beda College in Rome, where future Westminster priests are formed. Sadly, due to Coronavirus, the Colleges are closed. They all have on-line lectures and are in regular contact with the formation staff and with their spiritual directors. The seminarians are praying for an end to the pandemic, for priests serving in parishes and hospitals, and for all the healthcare staff, in hospitals, and care homes., and for all those who are suffering from this virus.

This year due to the pandemic, as we are unable to gather in our churches to celebrate Mass, we will not be having a collection for the Priests Training Fund. Do pray for the seminarians and for those discerning God's call at this time. May they model their actions and words the example of the Good Shepherd our Lord Jesus Christ, who came to serve and not to be served. Donations to the Priests Training Fund are gratefully received. Should you wish to make a donation, please do visit the donation page.

May God bless you all, Fr Christopher

Readings for this & next Sunday

1st Reading; Acts 2: 14, 36-41
Psalm 22 response v 1
2nd Reading - 1 Peter 2; 20-25
Gospel – John 10; 1-10

1st Reading; Acts 6: 1-7
Psalm 32: 1-2, 4-5, 18-19, response v 22
2nd Reading - 1 Peter 2; 4-9
Gospel – John 14; 1-12

The Good Shepherd

Reading the Gospel of John 10: 1-10 The Good Shepherd, we are all familiar with psalm 23 and how often I use it when I am down. The Gospel reminds us that he loves us and he speaks my name with overflowing tenderness and love. Jesus is personal and we can think of Mary of Magdala who came to the tomb on that first Easter Sunday and ever so gently calls her name 'Mary!'

My name is written in the palms of his hands (Is 49:16). I can imagine myself prising his hands open and discover that it's true! I am there in print. So, its important in our prayer to recognise the voice of the good shepherd. We train ourselves to learn to distinguish the voice of the Lord from all the other voices that come in. The cultures around us speak in authoritative ways, and we see how advertisements do all they can to make the message compelling, and we get flattered by our national identities and can lure us away to another flock. The tone of the voice makes all the difference. The truth can be offered in a way that invites or it can be heard as being harsh and unwelcoming. Let's consider for a moment how Jesus speaks to us, calling us to growth and life. Is this how I speak to others? And to myself? Remember, all of us have to go through Him if we are to obtain eternal life, and who or what is it that prevents us from following our Lord. *Fr. Chris*

'If the Lord is to be praised in those saints by whom He works miracles, how much more is He to be praised in Her in whom He the Wonder of wonders was made flesh! If they are to be praised who keep their chastity, how much more she who chose virginity, and received fruitfulness as its reward! If they are to be praised by whom God raised the dead, how much more she by whose holiness the whole world has been raised from death eternal! Let us, then, praise her with our mouths, and beware lest we insult her by acts, He gives but feigned praise who cares not to imitate what he praises. He truly praises Mary's humility who strives himself to be humble. He truly praises her chastity who execrates and scorns all impurity and lust. He truly praises her chastity whose whole desires and efforts are to love both God and his neighbour with perfect love'.

St. Aelred (1109-1167)

MESSAGE FOR THE MONTH OF RAMADAN AND 'ID AL-FITR

Dear Muslim brothers and sisters,

The month of Ramadan is so central in your religion and therefore dear to you at personal, familial and social levels. It is a time for spiritual healing and growth, of sharing with the poor, of strengthening bonds with relatives and friends.

For us, your Christian friends, it is a propitious time to further strengthen our relationships with you, by greeting your, meeting you on this occasion and, where possible, by sharing in an iftar with you. Ramadan and 'Id al-Fitr thus are special occasions to foster fraternity between Christians and Muslims. It is in this spirit that the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue offers its prayerful best wishes and hearty congratulations to you all.

The thoughts we like to share with you this year following our cherished traditions are about the protection of the places of worship.

As we all know, the places of worship occupy an important place in Christianity and Islam, and in other religions as well. For both Christians and Muslims, churches and mosques are spaces reserved for prayer, personal and communitarian alike. They are constructed and furnished in a way that favours silence, reflection and mediation. They are spaces where one can go deep in himself/herself, so favouring for God-experience in silence. A place of worship of any religion therefore is "a house of prayer".

Places of worship are also spaces for spiritual hospitality, where believers of other religions also join for some special ceremonies like weddings, funerals, feasts of the community etc. While they participate in the events in silence and with due respect to the religious observances of the believers of the particular religion, they also savour the hospitality accorded to them. Such practice is a privileged witness to what unites believers, without diminishing of denying what distinguishes them.

In this regard, it is worthwhile to recall what Pope Francis said when he made a visit to the *Heydar Aliyev* Mosque, in Baku (Azerbaijan) on Sunday, 2nd October 2016: "Meeting one another in fraternal friendship in this place of prayer is a powerful sign, one that shows the harmony which religions can build together, based on personal relations and on the good will of those responsible".

In context of recent attacks on churches, mosques and synagogues by wicked persons who seems to perceive the places of worship as a privileged target for their blind and senseless violence, it is worth noting what the Document of "Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together", signed by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Dr. Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, in Abu Dhabi, on 4th February 2019, said: "The protection of places of worship - synagogues, churches and mosques - is a duty guaranteed by religious, human values, laws and international agreements. Every attempt to attack place of worship or threaten them by violent assaults, bombing or destruction, is a deviation from the teaching of religions as well as a clear violation of international law".

While appreciating the efforts done by the international community at different levels for the protection of the places of worship worldwide, it is our hope that our mutual esteem, respect and cooperation will help strengthen the bonds of sincere friendship, and enable our communities to safeguard the places of worship to assure for coming generations the fundamental freedom to profess one's own beliefs.

With renewed esteem and fraternal greetings, in the name of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, we convey friendly wishes for a fruitful month of Ramadan and a joyous 'Id al-Fitr.

From the Vatican, 17th April 2020

PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

(please, pass it on to your Muslim friends)

A People who Hope in Christ

A Message from the Metropolitan Archbishops of the Catholic Church in England and Wales

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

The radiance of the risen Lord shines upon us. At a time when so many shadows are cast into our lives, and upon our world, the light of the resurrection shines forever to renew and restore our hope. In the words of our Holy Father, Pope Francis: *'In the midst of isolation when we are suffering from a lack of tenderness and chances to meet up, and we experience the loss of so many things, let us once again listen to the proclamation that saves us: he is risen and is living by our side.'* (27 March 2020).

The impact of Covid-19, both nationally and internationally, has been immense. So much of what we take for granted has changed. Our health and physical interaction, our capacity to travel and gather, have all been affected. There is uncertainty in our future, especially with work and the country's economy. As we know, very sadly, large numbers of people have died because of the coronavirus, and others have been or remain seriously ill. Keyworkers, not least in the National Health Service and care sectors, are serving selflessly to sustain the life of our nation. Our hearts and prayers go out to everyone who is suffering because of Covid-19, and to all those battling to overcome its effects. May those who have died rest in peace and those who are bereaved find comfort.

When the Prime Minister announced the lockdown, this included places of worship and therefore Catholic churches. These measures were put in place to stem the general transmission of the virus. It is right that the Catholic community fulfils its role in contributing to the preservation of life and the common good of society. This must continue until the restrictions applied by the Government are lifted.

None of us would want to be in the situation in which we find ourselves. While the live-streaming of the Mass and other devotions is playing an important part in maintaining the life of faith, there is no substitute for Catholics being able to physically attend and participate in the celebration of the Mass and the other sacraments. Our faith is expressed powerfully and beautifully though 'seeing, touching, and tasting.' We know that every bishop and every priest recognises the pain of Catholics who, at present, cannot pray in church or receive the sacraments. This weighs heavily on our hearts. We are deeply moved by the Eucharistic yearning expressed by so many members of the faithful. We thank you sincerely for your love for the Lord Jesus, present in the sacraments and supremely so in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The bishops and priests of every diocese are remembering you and your loved ones at Mass each day in our churches as we pray 'in hope of health and wellbeing. We thank our priests for this faithfulness to their calling.

As the Government's restrictions are relaxed step by step, we look forward to opening our churches and resuming our liturgical, spiritual, catechetical and pastoral life step by step. This will also be of service to those beyond the Catholic Church who depend on our charitable activity and outreach through which much goodness is shared by so many volunteers from our communities. None of us knows, as yet, how or when the lockdown will end. There is likely to be a phased return to travelling and gathering. As a church, we are now planning for this time and our discussions with the statutory public health agencies and Government representatives are ongoing. Together with Catholics across England and Wales we desire the opening of our churches and access to the sacraments. Until then, we are continuing to pray and prepare.

We want to acknowledge with gratitude the service of our fellow bishops and priests, our deacons and religious, our families and lay faithful, together with all our parish and school communities, for the wonderful ways the life of the faith is being nourished at this time, especially in the home. We also pay tribute to the Catholic organisations and networks that are working to support the vulnerable and needy. On that first Easter day, the disciples were in lockdown and the doors were closed. In their isolation the Lord Jesus came among them and said 'Peace be with you.' May the peace of the risen Lord reign in our hearts and homes as we look forward to the day we can enter church again and gather around the altar to offer together the Sacrifice of Praise.

We unite in asking the intercession of Our Blessed Lady and assure you of our prayers and blessing

Yours devotedly in Christ,

- ✠ Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster
- ✠ Malcolm McMahon OP, Archbishop of Liverpool
- ✠ Bernard Longley, Archbishop of Birmingham
- ✠ George Stack, Archbishop of Cardiff
- ✠ John Wilson, Archbishop of Southwark

To the Cloistered Nuns

A letter from the Desert

We turn to you, sisters living behind walls, to ask for your prayers. We ask during this time of special danger and struggle which our communities are experiencing, that you keep your arms raised like those who did so for Moses on the mountain. Our resilience depends on your insistent intercession, as does our future victory. You are the only Italians not to flinch in the face of the downpour of decrees and restrictions which have drenched us in recent days. This is because what we have been asked to do for a time is what you have always done, and that which we put up with, you have already chosen.

Teach us the art of being content with nothing, of living in a confined space, without going out but yet with the art of being charged with the need for that inner journey which requires neither fresh air nor trains. "Give us some of your oil" so we can learn that the spirit cannot be imprisoned and that the smaller the space, the greater is the opening onto the heavens.

Teach us that it is possible to live with very little and to live in joy. Remind us that poverty is the unavoidable condition of every being because, as Primo Mazzolari has said, "to be poor, we only have to be human." Teach us again about the savour of little things, you who smile at a lily flowering outside the window and who salute the swallows when they come to tell us that spring has arrived, you who are moved by sorrow and yet can still delight in the miracle of bread rising in the oven. Give us back that delight in the small things.

Tell us that it is possible to be close without being together in the one place, that we can communicate from afar, kiss without touching, enrich each other with the caress of a glance or a smile, quite simply, just to look at each other. Remind us that the word is important if it has matured for a long time in the heart, if it has been lightened in the storeroom of the heart, if we see it flower on the lips of another when it is spoken quietly, without shouting or being sharpened to wound. Above all, teach us the art of silence, of the light which touches the windowsill, of the sun who rises 'like a bridegroom coming from his chamber', or the art of the sunset in a heaven tinged with fire, of the evening quiet, of the lit candle which throws a shadow across the walls of the choir.

Tell us again that it is possible to wait for an embrace, even to wait a lifetime, because 'there is a time for embracing and a time a time refrain from embracing' as Quohelth says. President Conte has said that when this time of danger and restriction is over, we will once again embrace with celebration. For you, Sisters, there have already been twenty, thirty, forty years of waiting...

Teach us to do things slowly with solemnity and without rushing, to pay attention to details because every day is a miracle, every encounter is a gift, every step an entrance into the throne room, like the step in a dance or the movement of a symphony

Whisper to us that it is important to wait, to send a kiss, a gift, a caress, a word, because waiting for the feast strengthens the light because 'the best is yet to be'. Help us to understand that an accident can be a grace, and a disappointment can hide a gift, that a parting can deepen the love and that distance can lead to being together finally.

To you, mistresses of the hidden and happy life, we entrust our discomfort, our fear, our remorse, our missed appointments with God who always waits for us. Take all this into your prayer and restore us to joy, to the fragrance of flowers and to days of peace. Amen.

+ Arturo Aiello

Avellino, 13 March 2020

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