

St Thomas More – Parish Newsletter

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SUNDAY 21st MAY SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER (Year A)

About the Holy Spirit

Last Thursday we celebrated the Solemnity of the Ascension. During the days between the Ascension and Pentecost we are invited to pray more to the Holy Spirit, imitating Jesus' apostles who spent those days in prayer together with Mary in the Upper Room in Jerusalem. These considerations of Pope Francis during his Regina Coeli address last Sunday may be a helpful during these days.

Paraclete is a word that comes from Greek, which means both *consoler* and *advocate* at the same time [editor's note: the word also means 'lawyer' in Italian]. This means that the Holy Spirit never leaves us alone, he is near to us, like an advocate who assists the accused person, standing by his or her side. And he suggests to us how to defend ourselves from those who accuse us. Let us recall that the great accuser is always the devil, who puts sin inside of you, the desire to sin, wickedness. Let us reflect on these two aspects: his closeness to us, and his assistance against those who accuse us.

His *closeness*: the Holy Spirit, Jesus says, "dwells with you and will be in you" (cf. John 14, 17). He never abandons us. The Holy Spirit wants to stay with us: he is not a passing guest who comes to pay us a courtesy visit. He is a companion for life, a stable presence. He is Spirit and desires to dwell in our spirits. He is patient and stays with us even when we fall. He remains

because he truly loves us; he does not pretend to love us, and then leave us alone when things get difficult. No. He is faithful, he is transparent, he is authentic.

On the contrary! If we find ourselves in a moment of trial, the Holy Spirit consoles us, bringing us God's pardon and strength. And when he places our errors before us and corrects us, he does so gently – there is always the timbre of tenderness and the warmth of love in his voice that speaks to the heart. Certainly, the Spirit, the Paraclete, is demanding, because he is a true, faithful friend, who does not hide anything, who suggests what needs to change and where growth needs to take place. But when he corrects us, he never humiliates us, and never instills distrust. Rather, he conveys the certainty that with God, we can always make it. This is his closeness. This is a beautiful certainty.

The Spirit as Paraclete is the second aspect. He is our *advocate* and he defends us. He defends us from those who accuse us: from ourselves when we do not appreciate and forgive ourselves, when we go so far as perhaps saying to ourselves that we have failed, that we are good for nothing; from the world who discards those who do not fit into its dictates and patterns; from the devil who is the "accuser" *par excellence* and the divider (cf. Rev 12:10), and does everything to make us feel incapable and unhappy.

In the face of all these accusing thoughts, the Holy Spirit suggests to us how to respond. How? The Paraclete, Jesus says, is the One who “reminds us of everything Jesus told us” (cf. *Jn* 14:26). He *reminds* us, therefore, of the words of the Gospel, and thus enables us to respond to the accusing devil, not with our own words, but with the Lord’s own words. He reminds us, above all, that Jesus always spoke of the Father who is in heaven, he made the Father known to us, and revealed the Father’s love for us, that we are his children. If we call on the Spirit, we will learn to embrace and recall the most important truth of life that protects us from the accusations of the evil one. And what is the most important truth in life? That we are beloved children of God. We are God’s beloved children: this is the most important truth, and the Spirit reminds us of this.

Brothers and sisters, let us ask ourselves today: Do we call on the Holy Spirit? Do we pray to him often? Let us not forget about the one who is close to us, or rather, is within us! Then: Do we listen to his voice, both when he encourages us and when he corrects us? Do we respond with Jesus’s words to the accusations from the evil one, to the “tribunals” of life? Do we remember that we are beloved children of God? May Mary make us docile to the voice of the Holy Spirit and sensitive to his presence.

Pope Francis, Regina Coeli Address, St Peter’s Square Sunday 14th May 2023.

FORTHCOMING PARISH ACTIVITIES

Family Event

A group of parents with young families have organised a Family Day in the parish ground floor hall and garden **Sunday, 21st May**, starting around 12.30pm, after the 11am Mass. Everyone is welcome, including children of all ages. Tea/coffee and drinks for children will be provided, but please bring your own lunch/snacks. We hope this will be a great way for families of the parish to meet and get to know and support each other. If you are reading this before Sunday

on the web version kindly RSVP to dominik@nagly.eu if you intend to attend, mentioning how many adults and children will be joining.

Laudato Si Film

Laudato Si’ Week is just around the corner. From May 21-28 the Catholic Church will hold a global celebration of the 8 years since the launch of the encyclical *Laudato Si’*.

“Hope for the Earth. Hope for Humanity”, is the theme that will guide us this year.

The film **The Letter**, which tells the story of four “social poets” affected first-hand by the climate crisis who travel to Rome to meet Pope Francis, will be the main resource guiding the week’s events—there will be community screenings all over the world.

As mentioned in the newsletters the last few weeks, we will be showing **The Letter** in the parish hall on Thursday 25th May at 7pm. Please do come along, and bring your friends or family. The film is 80 minutes long, but there will be some time for discussion afterwards so we can consider what we can each do to respond to *Laudato Si’*.

REGINA CAELI

V. Queen of heaven, rejoice, alleluia;
R. For he whom you did merit to bear, alleluia.

V. Has risen as he said, alleluia;
R. Pray for us to God, alleluia.

V. Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia;

R. For the Lord is truly risen, alleluia.

Let us pray.

O God, who by the Resurrection of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, granted joy to the whole world: grant, we beseech you, that through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, his Mother, we may lay hold of the joys of eternal life. Through the same Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Seminars on Catholic Anthropology: Understanding yourself in today's world

On **17 and 18 June** we shall be hosting afternoon seminars from 3pm to 5.45pm to explore the notion of 'personhood' and its implications for a number of contemporary issues: who (rather than what) are we? Are we capable of knowing and relating to God? What can science tell us about the world and about God? The seminars will be led by Dr James Navarro, a research Professor at the University of the Basque Country. James has also taught at Imperial College and at Cambridge University. The seminars require no previous knowledge of the subjects covered.

Parents who would like to improve the way they talk to their children about the human body, love and parenthood; students who want to engage more confidently with their fellow students on topics such as gender dysphoria; and people who want to be able to explain Christian anthropology to their colleagues, will all find the seminars helpful.

Further details about the seminars and about Dr James Navarro can be found in the flyers at the entrance to the church. He has plenty of experience explaining philosophical ideas to the general public.

Young Adults Group

No activity of the Young Adults Group in the Parish this week, but keep updated on future events by contacting:

young.adults.group.stm@gmail.com or Fr Alvaro (alvaro.tintore@netherhall.org.uk)

Magnificat — May

Some copies of the May *Magnificat* (£5) is still available to buy. Please ask Maggie, or one of the priests for copies. It is possible to pay using the card reader at the entrance or placing cash in the newspaper and leaflet collection slot.

Devotion to the Holy Spirit

St Josemaría Escrivá, from his homily *The Great Unknown*

“To live according to the Holy Spirit means to live by faith and hope and charity – to allow God to take possession of our lives and to change our hearts completely, to make them like him more and more. A mature, deep and strong Christian life is something that cannot be improvised, because it is the result of the growth of God's grace in us. In the Acts of the Apostles we find the early Christian community described in a single sentence, brief but full of meaning: “they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.”

This is how the early Christians lived, and this is how we too should live: meditating the doctrine of our faith until it becomes a part of us; receiving our Lord in the Eucharist; meeting him in the personal dialogue of our prayer, face to face with God. (...)

There are no second-class Christians, obliged to practise only a reduced version of the Gospel. We have all received the same baptism, and although there is a great variety of spiritual gifts and human situations, there is only one Spirit who distributes God's gifts, only one faith, only one hope, only one love.

For some Christians, unfortunately, the Paraclete is the Great Stranger, the Great Unknown. He is merely a name that is mentioned, but not Someone, not one of the three persons in the one God, with whom we talk and with whose life we live.

Instead, we have to deal with him simply and trustingly, as we are taught by the Church in its liturgy. Then we will come to know our Lord better, and at the same time, we will realise more fully the great favour that has been granted us when we became Christians.”

	MASS	OTHER ACTIVITIES
SUN 21st May SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER (Readings. Year A)	9.30am For all those studying for exams 11am Mass Tim Clarke and family (intentions) 6pm Mass People of the Parish	The Church opens at 9.15am 10.30am Confessions 5.30pm Confessions
MON 22nd May St Rita of Cascia, Religious	7am Mass For Peace in Sudan 10am Mass Ann Palmer (RIP)	The Church opens at 6.50am Monday to Friday for 7am Mass (entry via Church car park). Main doors open at 9.30am
TUE 23rd May Easter feria	7am Mass For health workers 10am Mass Persecuted Christians	
WED 24th May Easter feria	7am Mass For those involved in Pro-Life projects 10am Mass For all who are sick in the Parish	
THU 25th May St Bede the Venerable, Priest & Doctor	7am Mass For Peace in Ukraine 10am Mass For increased understanding of our stewardship of all God's creation	7pm-9pm Laudato Si – film 'The Letter', showing in the Hall
FRI 26th May St Philip Neri, Priest Friday abstinence	7am Mass For the intentions of the Holy Father 10am Mass For vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life	10am to Noon Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament
SAT 27th May ST AUGUSTINE OF CANTERBURY, Bishop	10am Mass For children preparing for First Holy Communion	The Church opens at 9.30am

Prayer Intentions:

Recently deceased: Joseph Power; Ghislaine Williams; Helen Birch; Alice Hancock; Rita McNally; Mick Morrisette Tabet; Edouardo Arboleda; Duarte Costa Pereira

Anniversary: Maroun Ramia; Iris Nally; Veronica O'Farrell; Peggy Attlee; Camillo de Castiglioni; Peter Monaghan

Confessions:

Monday to Friday (before and after 10am Mass)

Saturday: before and after 10am Mass

Sunday: 10.30am and 5.30pm (before Mass)

Forthcoming Events:

28th May: PENTECOST SUNDAY

4th June: THE MOST HOLY TRINITY