



The Diocese of Banjul **NEWSLETTER**

Incorporating The Catholic Newsletter

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DIOCESE OF BANJUL NEWSLETTER

Our Mission and Vision

We entertain, we encourage, and we enlighten. More so, Diocese of Banjul Newsletter gives you the tools you need to feed your faith life, nurture our society and relationships, care for your family, and bring the light of Christ to others. We connect with our readers through personal stories of triumphs and struggles, joys and challenges, and the lighter side of Christian living.

Diocese of Banjul Newsletter is a source of support and encouragement for our society, especially those who love their faith, those who struggle with their faith, and those who long to learn more about the richness of Catholic tradition. More so, we strive to build a healthy society for the welfare of all.

Diocese of Banjul Newsletter seeks the positive in the world and in our Church. It emphasizes those things that our society is doing right and well, as a means of inspiring and encouraging others to do the same. It is hope-filled, optimistic, and forward-looking. In the main, the newsletter moves our readers beyond inspiration and toward action, and gives them the information, tools, and resources they need to answer God’s call to holiness and bring the light of Christ to others.



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EDITORIAL HINT

Surging Poverty in Rural Gambia and Its Misdiagnosis

Concentrated poverty concerns the spatial distribution of socio-economic deprivation. In The Gambia, it is now a trending case in our rural communities, and a consequence of the abandonment of the rural communities to their age-long fate of hopelessness.

With the growing manner of uneven development in the country, one notices a very clear spatial distribution of socio-economic deprivation. Income poverty and household food insecurity are widespread, with nearly half of the population living below the absolute poverty line, which is living on less than one dollar per day. This is commonly seen among a large segment of the population, especially in the rural communities, where most of the people have limited access to income sources and basic life-support amenities.

Over forty per cent of the Gambian population is located in rural areas who depend largely on agriculture. The agricultural sector employs 70 per cent of the labour force, and at least half of the country's poor are the rural farmers and allied agricultural workers.

Poverty is higher in rural areas than in urban areas, mainly due to overreliance on rain-fed agriculture and their exclusion from economic opportunities and social services. It is particularly prevalent in the North Bank, Central and Upper River Regions, where about two-thirds of the population are poor. Poverty remains more of a rural phenomenon where the poor typically work in the agricultural sector, while in urban areas the largest share of the poor participate in the informal service sector. The poverty rate in rural areas was estimated at 76% in 2020 compared to 34 % in urban areas. Even though poverty rates are high in the interior of the country compared to the coastal urban areas, one of the highest concentrations of the poor population is found in direct proximity to the Greater Banjul Area, in the Western Region area of Brikama. This concentration of poverty is increasingly recognized as a "causal factor" in compounding the effects of poverty by isolating residents from networks and resources useful for realizing human potential.

Areas of concentrated poverty place additional burdens on poor families residing within them, burdens beyond what these families' individual circumstances would

dictate. Concentrated poverty is infectious; it can have effects beyond the neighborhood in question, affecting surrounding neighborhoods and subsequently limiting their overall economic potential and social cohesion. Concentrated poverty is a new and growing phenomenon in The Gambia, with cases of it being found in our rural communities where it is having a ravaging impact. Concentrated poverty stands as a link between structural factors and social behaviors produced through the "concentration effects" of poverty.

Concentrated poverty and its attendant neighborhood characteristics affect crime and delinquency, education deficiencies, psychological distress, and various health problems, among many other issues. Thus, concentrated poverty imposes "double burden" on the poor families living in extremely poor communities; being poor and living in a poor community. Underlying the high poverty rates is the country's relative lack of economic diversity (undiversified economy in the midst of limited access to resources), which makes it highly vulnerable to increasingly erratic rainfall, seawater intrusion into cultivable lands, food price volatility with allied problematic socio-economic consequences such as: poverty being predominant in rural areas, low agricultural productivity, food insecurity and malnutrition, vulnerability to climate change and environmental degradation, migration and urbanization. Our government's policies tend to ignore the causative factors of rural poverty. Over time, focus has shifted away from the causes of concentrated poverty in our rural communities towards the behavior of the poor in response to concentrated poverty, which ultimately has led to reproducing the culture of poverty, thus severing the problem from its structural roots. The impact of the current poverty elimination and alleviation programs in place, portray a misdiagnosis of the real problem. However, multiple workable programs are available for adoption to mitigate the surging poverty phenomenon, only if there is the political will to do so. For instance, the government has ample opportunity of bringing the disturbing case of rural poverty to the glare of its development partners, as well as adopting deliberate and appropriate development policies that target the rural society.

PLEASE NOTE THE RAINS ARE HERE AGAIN!!!!

WILL this year's rains be what our farmers need? Those who live in Greater Banjul may think of the rains as a nuisance: leaks in the roof, flooding in the streets, more mosquitoes. But for our farmers, rainfall at the right time and in the right quantity is well-nigh essential. At this time of year, let's remind ourselves that our farmers' needs are greater than those of the rest of us.

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COVER STORY

‘Sang Marie’ Cometh

The Feast of Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into Heaven and What It Holds For Us

‘What shall we call thee, O thou who art full of grace? Heaven, for from thee hast dawned forth the Sun of Righteousness. Paradise, for from thee hath blossomed forth the flower of immortality. Virgin, for thou hast remained incorrupt. Pure Mother, for thou hast held in thy holy embrace the Son, the God of all. Do thou entreat Him to save our souls’.

The feast of Assumption of the Virgin Mary is one of the central events that bring the varying faiths together in The Gambia. One beautiful observable thing is that, in the celebration of ‘Sang Marie’, as it is popularly known in this country, it is hard to identify who is a Christian and who is not. Evidently, the event throws every Gambian into a festive mood, as people of all religions join hands in celebrating it. Intrinsicly, one comes to terms with the reality of the fact that, the Virgin Mary is the Mother of all.

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary is celebrated on the 15th of August, and is regarded as the most important Marian feast day in the Church's calendar. The sacred Tradition of the Church plays an important role in the daily celebration of our faith. Linked integrally with Scripture and the magisterium, the Tradition is God's revelation, and thus acts, as a source from which our knowledge and practice of the Faith is drawn. The feast of the Assumption, possibly the oldest celebration of the Virgin Mary, is rooted in the Tradition of Christian practice, supported by magisterial teaching and defined as one of four Marian dogmas.

Although Scripture makes no direct reference to the bodily ascension of Mary to heaven, several passages speak of the great dignity of her life, lending support to the idea that Jesus would have continued to reveal His glory by removing the corruption of the grave and extending the privilege of the Assumption to His mother. In the Hebrew Scriptures, the Song of Songs contains passages which some scholars today say are prophetic references to Mary. We read, “Arise, my friend, my beautiful one, and come!” (2:10). Also, “Daughters see her and call her happy, queens and concubines, and they praise her” (6:9). The New Testament also provides evidence supportive of Mary's special privilege. Gabriel's greeting, “Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women” (Lk 1:28, 42), and Revelation 12:1, in its description of “a woman clothed with the sun,” are illustrative and a strong pointer to the reality of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which the church celebrates with the unshakable belief that the Mother of God, was taken, body and soul, when her life on earth was over, into heaven. As the Mother of God Incarnate, her role in God's plan of salvation is central, and as a result, she joined her Divine Son in Heaven at the conclusion of her mortal life. The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary was proclaimed dogma in 1950 by Pope Pius XII, making it an infallible teaching of the Church. While this seems



relatively recent, the belief in the Mother of God entering eternal glory, after her earthly death, has been a part of Christian tradition since the early centuries, and she has always played a significant role in the Catholic faith.

The Feast of the Assumption is Our Lady's primary feast day because it celebrates her assumption into Heaven as the Mother of God and as one of the first humans to achieve salvation and eternal life through her Son, the Redeemer. With her assumption, her role as the God-bearer is fulfilled, and she is crowned in glory as Queen of Heaven, the most holy of the saints, and the human being dwelling closest to God the Trinity, interceding for us. Because of this, the Blessed Virgin Mary has a special place in the devotion of Christians, and she provides an example of perfect faithfulness and obedience to God for us to emulate.

As with many Church feasts, the liturgical celebration of the Assumption began its evolution in the East. Church calendars of the ancient Armenian and Ethiopian Churches, as well as the schismatic Nestorian and Monophysite communities, contain a date to commemorate Mary's death, which gives evidence that the feast had deep roots, even before the definition of Mary as Mother of God proclaimed at Ephesus.

In Eastern Catholic and Orthodox Churches, the feast

day is referred to as “The Dormition of the Theotokos”, in which the Blessed Virgin Mary is believed to have “fallen asleep”, meaning her mortal body died, and like Christ her son, she rose again in glory on the third day before being assumed into Heaven. The Latin rite of the Catholic Church does not specify whether or not the Blessed Virgin Mary experienced earthly death before she was assumed into Heaven, body and soul. It is generally accepted that she did die and was resurrected by God, but many Catholics believe she was assumed into heaven never having died, and there are no definitive teachings on her earthly death, either way.

The early importance of the Blessed Virgin Mary to the life of Christians was especially evident in 431 AD at the third ecumenical council, the Council of Ephesus. This council confirmed the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed of the first two councils, but also condemned the teachings of Nestorius, who wanted to distinguish between Christ’s human and divine natures, and claimed that the Blessed Virgin Mary should have the title of Christotokos (“Christ-bearer”) rather than Theotokos (“God-bearer”). It was decided that Christ was both fully divine and fully human, and the two natures were inseparable, so the role of the Blessed Virgin Mary as the Mother of God was affirmed.

As the Mother of God, the Blessed Virgin Mary has always been the subject of intense devotion. She was an exceptionally holy and sinless human being chosen by God to be the bearer of His Incarnate Word, making her instrumental in the salvation of the world. When the angel Gabriel visited her and told her she was to conceive the Son of God by the Holy Spirit, her response was “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done unto me according to thy word,” expressing her great faith and obedience to the will of God. For this reason, early Church Fathers like Augustine of Hippo and Origen of Alexandria, viewed the Mother of God as the new Eve, in a similar way to how Paul’s epistle to the Romans describes Christ as the second Adam, contrasting the disobedience of Adam to Christ’s obedience to the Father. Through her obedience to God, Our Lady begins God’s plan of salvation that reconciles creation to God after the fall that resulted from the first disobedience of Adam and Eve in the Garden, crushing the head of the serpent beneath her feet. Our Lady is the gate through which God enters into temporal existence, taking on our nature and sanctifying humanity and all of the created order.

The Gospel reading for the Feast of the Assumption comes from the first chapter of Luke, when Our Lady is greeted by her cousin Elizabeth, who has conceived a child in her old age, and Elizabeth says to her, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.” Our Lady’s response is the passage traditionally known as the Magnificat. She proclaims an inversion of the social order, in which the mighty are knocked down and the humble are raised up, the hungry are fed and the rich are sent away empty, echoing the Song of Hannah from the first book of Samuel from the Old Testament. The Magnificat that Our Lady sings foreshadows the Kingdom of God that her Son is to bring, fulfilling the covenant that God made with Abraham and his descendants. The fulfillment of the covenant, through the incarnation of the Divine Logos, begins with Our Lady’s assent to be the Mother of God.

The historical evolution of the Feast of the Assumption is incomplete without some reflection on this celebration’s significance for people today. Mary’s role as the supreme model to follow in our common vocation to holiness and

discipleship, finds its ultimate triumph and reward in her assumption. Our certainty of Mary’s return to God, body and soul, prefigures our own resurrection and final union with God. In celebrating Mary’s assumption, we not only celebrate the love that God showed her, but in more general terms, the love that God has shown to all His children, in granting the possibility of final resurrection to all. Jesus’ earthly life brought salvation history to its climax; Mary’s assumption gives us hope that, in a constantly changing and ever more complex world, God never abandons those who love Him, but rather rewards them with eternal life.

Our attitude must emulate the thanksgiving which was the Blessed Mother’s constant prayer. In her wisdom, the Church uses Mary’s Magnificat (Lk 1:46-55) as the Gospel in the Eucharistic celebration of the Assumption. Mary knew that God had done great things for her and she was grateful. It is our challenge to express equal gratitude to God for what we receive in our daily lives, both the sorrows and the joys. Mary, the Sorrowful Mother, gave thanks to God and received the special privilege of resurrection. So, too, can all of us find final union with God through lives of thankful praise. Mary’s role as the Mother of God, and the dignity of her life, make the Assumption her privilege, as she continues to serve as the perfect model of discipleship for all the faithful. Certain great events in history attest to the truth of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Let us bring to view the events of Fatima in 1917. Among Her messages to the three shepherd children, the Virgin Mary requested that we should say the Rosary everyday, especially to obtain world peace. As we all know, the focal prayer of the Rosary of the Virgin Mary is the repetition of the ‘Hail Mary’ prayer, and petition prayer in the ‘Hail Mary’ after the salutation goes thus: “Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death”, For Mary to have requested for ceaseless praying of Her Rosary speaks volumes about the fact that, She occupies a prominent place in Heaven, which cannot be possible without Her Assumption. The Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary thus, among others, calls us to the duty of ceaseless praying of Her holy Rosary. In fact, the daily recitation of the Rosary is one of the ways we consummate our belief and appreciation of Mary’s elevation by God, through Her glorious Assumption.

Our Mother, the Virgin Mary assumed into Heaven, is also the Queen of peace, and I am of the firm belief that, the peace we enjoy in The Gambia today, can be attributed to a product of the blessings She showers upon our nation, in appreciation of the honor She receives from people of all faiths during ‘Sang Marie’, among others. Let us therefore continue to keep our unity and the amazing tradition of a united celebration, and honoring of the Virgin Mary’s Assumption into Heaven, which we do every ‘Sang Marie’ in this country. Let us continue to promote our culture of religious tolerance, oneness and the values of inter-faith sharing and harmony, which we show every ‘Sang Marie’ in our beloved nation, The Gambia.

*By Mr Joseph Akagha
Editorial Consultant*



The Pope's Prayer Intentions 2023

August - FOR WORLD YOUTH DAY

We pray that World Youth Day in Lisbon will help young people to live and witness the Gospel in their own lives.

September - FOR PEOPLE LIVING ON THE MARGINS

We pray for those persons living on the margins of society, in inhumane life conditions; may they not be overlooked by institutions and never considered of lesser importance.

VIEWPOINT

The New Face of The Gambia

By Sr. Marie Gibba

Shameful to know that some things we ought to have outgrown as a nation still keep derailing our peaceful coexistence. Take away religion and we're one same people. So why the bigotry, the hate, the disrespect, disregard? Why?

The earlier we realize our disdain for other people's beliefs won't change anything the better we'll live.

Enough is enough.

The above message, and many other inspiring ones, provoked me to embark on a long journey travel to my heart; for love of my beloved country The Gambia - Wisdom in your write-up brother!

My heart is saddened as I reflect on the kind of GAMBIA we are to hand over to future generations to come. Is it going to be a United Gambia or a divided one? This will surely call for a collective and personal reflection as a nation and individuals.

It can only take the grace of God, self-discipline, maturity, respect, tolerance, and above all, the Love of God, neighbours and self, for one to arrive at this hard truth. Basically, the reality is we still need to be emancipated from our enslaved mind-set of ignorance we mistake for religiosity. It's sad that many who claim to have, love are the custodians of spreading hatred. No one can give what he or she doesn't have. That is to say, you can't preach what you don't have. Love is the answer to inter-religious dialogue and tolerance.

We have now reached a point where, the few that are conscious, need to act positively, and differently by enlightening the great captives that are held in the darkness of their self-righteousness. The fact is, in every sect or religion, there is a high possibility of finding black sheep or ignorant lunatics that have no clue of the length and breadth of their faith doctrine. In that light, friends, whichever way we are trying to express our sentiments for being trampled upon, let us try to be considerate of the few virtuous ones and our call for discipleship. We ought to act responsibly and respectfully at all costs.

From the look of things, at times it feels as if we gained our independence last night. Who would have believed that we are more than 50 years old as a Republic? We are close to our retirement age (from active service) but then, the level of immaturity shown on social media and in our society today is heart-breaking. It shows that we are still

feeding on milk (food meant for babies) and not solid food (that is supposed to be for adults).

Let us wake up from our nightlong slumber "The Gambia our Home Land", We have grown! We are old! We ought to start thinking about the Will we should write together as a Nation, for our children yet to be born (the future generations).

Here comes a rhetorical question: Is The Gambia truly "The Smiling Coast of Africa" as we have it today? Well, yesterday was quite considerate but as for today Oops! I definitely wonder .

Our lens might differ but then the trending feeling is that the National Cake is seemingly served selectively; at the detriment of the minority. **Oo! Ye that serveth, shine your eyes well so as to be able to see and give each and every CITIZEN their rightful share of their BIRTHRIGHT.**

I am, therefore, encouraging my Christian brothers and sisters to remain calm and respectful by allowing the proper protocol to take effect. Else, we will only be adding more flames to the fire. Perhaps, it is a time to be on our knees in prayer for the deliverance of our nation, The Gambia, and our collective emancipation from the slavery of the mind-set.

Therefore, let us not lose sight of our identity as "the **SALT** of the Earth and the **LIGHT** of the World". (**Matthew 5: 13-16**)

The peace and religious tolerance of my (our) Mother Land (The Gambia) is my interest and desire.

Thus, in peace I come to share and enlighten. Therefore, I stand to be corrected.

One Gambia, One Nation, One People, yet different faith of belief. "Variety is the spice of LIFE"!

Peace and Love! The Gambia for us all.

That's my humble view on the new face of The Gambia. Your sister I remain.

**A PICTURE FOR OUR CHILDREN
TO COLOUR AS THEY REFLECT
ON 'SANG MARIE'**



When the Virgin Mary's life on earth was over, God raised her to heaven, where she is seated at the right hand of her Son, Jesus.



Rebranding The Gambia Using A Strategic Diplomatic Approach

Continued from last edition

Thus, there is a recognized need for The Gambia to rebrand herself and repackage it for regional and global reckoning, that will set it apart from its regional competitors and inform global perceptions on the country's potentials, especially in specific areas such as tourism, investment and international relations. There is the urgent need to create an overall national identity with consistent messaging which can be used by all internal and external stakeholders who are involved in the promotion of The Gambia to the global audience.

Efforts were made in the past (in 2016) to launch The Gambia country brand at the Kairaba Beach Hotel in a ceremony attended by senior government officials, tourism stakeholders and representatives of public and private sector organizations in the country. During the process, the country's Brand Logo and its Tag-Line was presented. The brand represents the people, their cultural heritage, the environment - their habitat and the existence of overflowing opportunities in this country, in enriching their cultural diversity, promoting peace and socio-economic growth. A country's branding also promotes trade, commerce, investment and tourism and support the country's development under one common banner – The Gambia. The fact that it has not made the desired impacts indicates the need for further review and engaging a strategic diplomatic approach.

One of the strategic ways to rebrand the country is to make a complete analysis of her previous strategies and try to find out where they fell short after which it will define its current objectives and then create the step-by-step plan to achieve them. Nations, come branded, sometimes willfully and sometimes by accident. A nation gets a brand identity based on its strength of delivering a quality product consistently over time, for instance, Switzerland for tourism and banking, USA for freedom, Italy for food and fashion, etc.). The slogan, The Gambia, for peace and harmony and for cultural rectitude may suffice. Our reach cultural and national heritage can be positive flash points for The Gambia.

Rebranding a nation with a negative image as depicted in the regime of Yahya Jammeh is challenging but not impossible as in the case with The Gambia under Adama Barrow. To rebrand a nation, a nation must have two things in order: Infrastructure: Hard (transportation, energy, water management, communication systems), and soft (financial, education, health care, legal system, and a good system of governance structure), strong institutions that put a nation at par with competing nations. A people's skill or talent: Based on available resources that differentiate a country from competing nations. Once these two requirements are put in place, an identity for a nation starts to emerge.

To strategically rebrand The Gambia from the tourism perspectives, it must take lessons from Colombia, Rwanda, and Croatia. Twenty-five years ago, Colombia, Rwanda, and Croatia were all viewed as dangerous, war-torn countries only suitable for journalists and the most hardened of veteran travelers. Now, they routinely feature

on travel bucket-lists, and will surely be heading millions of travelers' to-do lists as soon as international travel returns to normal. It must remain open to the possibility that a perceived weakness can be flipped on its head and turn into an advantage. It must put in place the right systems to actually follow through on their promises. It must learn and rest on the facts that any effort to shift perceptions significantly is never going to be an overnight win, and must therefore prepare the country for the long-haul and take every incremental win. It must consciously work to boost the relationship between music, travel and gastronomy, engaging influencers in the process and also be ready to invest a lot in advertising your rebranded nation so that it became successful.

The need for nation branding usually stems from a country's desire to take control of its narrative away from negative media portrayals or negative national stereotypes. Gambia's image is perceived as bad due to corruption, selfishness, carefree attitude, and ignorance of both leaders and citizens. As such, there is a need to redeem the image through the concept of rebranding or nation branding. This image laundering approach aims to change the negative narratives and perception held by the international community and instead, promote a better narrative based on what a country can offer and favour the government and its citizenry. Countries adopt this approach hoping that other nations will change their attitudes and perceptions towards them from negative to positive and consequently invest their money in such countries.

There is a potential relation between public diplomacy and nation branding; relationship building is the central paradigm of both public diplomacy and nation branding and hence the need for more integration and cooperation between nations. The place of diplomatic engagement in selling the image of The Gambia must be fully explored and tapped into taking into considerations the marketing values of the personnel of The Gambia at Embassies of all countries in The Gambia and also at the Embassies of The Gambia in all countries all over the world. Implementation of these strategies will help sell the country's and thus boost her image and perception at the global stage. Public diplomacy can boost a history of a nation as it helps to influence public attitudes on the formation and execution of foreign policies. Public diplomacy traditionally means government communication aimed at foreign audiences to achieving changes in the 'hearts or minds' of the people. This is where the diplomatic community along with the civil society must continue to play active roles, especially in the Gambia. Sir Richard Branson, founder of Virgin Group, is a business magnate, author, investor and philanthropist noted that "Branding demands commitment; commitment to continual re-invention; striking chords with people to stir their emotions; and commitment to imagination. It is easy to be cynical about such things, much harder to be successful", this remains true as regards the attempts in The Gambia.

Although nation's branding promotes "wealth" in finance-capital-intensive, attention-intensive, and knowledge- or experience-intensive economies, other

forms of collective wealth may be lost in the process, except a holistic approach is adopted and clinically executed. The need to place and sustained The Gambia on the global positive perception should be wholistic affair by all the stakeholders. In as much as the country continues to desire development and growth that come with patronage and investments it must imperatively work to rebrand The Gambia using a strategic diplomatic approach. If The

Gambia did not say, here I am, nobody will say there you are. Projecting the image of the country positively is a clarion call that concerns all. A country that is rebranded is a country that wants a new beginning for the benefits of the citizenry. Rebranding is the rock stars of commerce as it creates many fans, both at home and abroad - Simon Anholt. In all, rebranding is a reason to celebrate and small improvements are the key to staggering daily improvement.

REMEMBERING THE LATE HENRY GOMEZ

27th February, 1953 - 30th September, 2022

**A DEAR COLLEAGUE, UNCLE AND FATHER
TO EVERYONE AT GPI,
'AFFECTIONATELY CALLED
UNCLE HENRY'**

**Continue to rest in perfect peace as we
remember you on this day.**

**Bless those who mourn, eternal God,
with the comfort of your love
that they may face each new day with
hope and the certainty that nothing can
destroy the good that has been given.
May their memories become joyful,
their days enriched with friendship,
and their lives encircled by your love.
Amen.**



**Question
Generally Asked**



**'Why do you Catholics worship the
Virgin Mary?'**

What should I have answered?

MAKE it absolutely clear to your non-Catholic friends that Catholics do NOT worship Mary. Worship is due to God alone. But, along with other Christians, Catholics do reverence Mary. In Scripture, Mary herself declares: '...all generations shall call me blessed' (Luke 1:48).

Faithful to Scripture, the Nicene Creed declares that Jesus Christ 'came down from heaven by the power of the Holy Spirit, and became incarnate by the Virgin Mary, and was made man.' This creed is assented to by Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican and the great majority of Protestant Christians. So Catholics hold these beliefs about Mary in common with most other Christian communities.

At the Council of Ephesus in 431, Mary was given the title 'Mother of God' (in Latin, *Mater Dei*; in Greek, *Theotokos* - 'God Bearer'). 'Mother of God' makes some Protestants uneasy. The title does, of course, honour Mary;

but it's essential importance is that, it makes clear the divinity of Christ, who is true God and true man. Mary is mother of the man who is God. Some have suggested that the title could be rendered, 'Mother of God Incarnate'.

Distinct Catholic doctrines about Mary include three assertions:

- ◆ that she possessed the Divine Life from the moment of her conception (the Immaculate Conception);
- ◆ that she was sinless throughout her earthly life;
- ◆ that at the end of her earthly life, she was assumed, body and soul, into heaven (the Assumption).

Like the Orthodox, and some Anglicans, Catholics invoke Mary and the saints, asking for their prayers. Because Mary is eternally close to her Son, her prayers are particularly precious.

The most frequent invocation of Mary is contained in the *Angelus*: 'Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death.' This is the briefest summary of Catholic belief and practice about Mary. If you have *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, study sections 963-972, and you will be well-primed to answer questions about Mary from other Christians (including some Catholics!), as well as from Muslims.

Note that the Qur'an has many most respectful references to Mary.

SCHOOL HOLIDAYS & FEAST



Month of School
holidays,



and what comes after...

Mention the eighth month - the month of August - and most Catholics will think of *Sang Marie*. Not only Catholics, of course.

August is also notably a holiday month for children and their teachers. There is no more demanding profession than teaching, and most teachers deserve a good rest. We should thank them for all their efforts during the past school year, and pray for them.

September will come sooner than we expect, and with it the re-opening of schools. Head teachers often talk of the need for a working partnership between the school and parents. Such a partnership involves parents in everyday support of their children at home and in what their children are learning at school. At home as well as in school, children should learn the value of cleanliness, attention to detail, consideration for others - and much else, including tolerance and a spirit of give-and-take. Such advice may seem old-fashioned. But why not? The school curriculum is evolving and expanding to meet our nation's and our children's needs, but religious and family values and the values that promote learning don't change. Parents - and



grandparents - can show children that though their own schooldays are long over they, too, are still keen to learn, so as to enjoy life to the full.

As August and September give way to the rest of the year,

some may think that with *Sang Marie* behind us, the next big Christian feast will be Christmas. But every single Sunday is a public holiday - and for Christians it's the most important day of the week. As for feast days, what about All Saints', which happens this year to fall on a Sunday? What about the following day, All Souls? What about Christ the King Sunday?

What about the Immaculate Conception and the December national pilgrimage to Kunkujang Mariama? There are plenty of Christian 'big days' before Christmas!

But you and I can treat every day as a 'big day' - a big opportunity to live life to the full. An opportunity for kindness and helpfulness in the family and beyond. An opportunity to listen and to learn. An opportunity to share comfort and cheer. No more lost opportunities. We don't know what tomorrow may bring; but that's not our problem - not until tomorrow comes. Let's make *today* our big day!

As August gives way to September and the rest of the year, Christians will want to thank God daily, and ask him to help us make each day fruitful for ourselves, our families, our diocese and the nation.



A REMINDER AS A CATHOLIC

Many whom have been careless about regular attendance at Sunday Mass may wish to make a fresh start. It's never too late.

To remain in good standing in the Church, all Catholics should take part in the Mass every Sunday and on all Holydays of Obligation.

Everyone - Catholic or otherwise - is welcome to attend Mass. But Holy Communion may be received only by Catholics, and they must be in a state of grace - that is, free of serious sin.

If you are aware of any grave sin, you must make confession before a priest and receive absolution. Then you may receive Holy Communion in good faith and with joy.

August & September

Gambian Christian Anniversaries

3rd September, 1949: Opening of St. Joseph's Infants' School, Banjul.

15th September, 1954: Death of Fr. John Meehan CSSp, who had served the Mission for 50 years, from 1908 to 1946.

21st September, 1957: Death in Nigeria of Daniel Joof, Gambian seminarian, who had spent six years studying for the priesthood.

14th August, 1961: Renovations to the clergy house at Bakau were completed.

1st August, 1964: The new primary school building at Lamin was opened.

4th August, 1967: Fr. Michael Flynn opened the mission house at Lamin.

1st September, 1968: Official opening of the new premises in Campama, Banjul of St. Augustine's High School, with late Fr. Michael Cleary (Bishop Emeritus) as Principal. Other Spiritan priests teaching at the school were Fr. Vincent Comer, Fr. John Hogan, Fr. Seán Little and Fr. Tom Tarmey.

6th September, 1973: Arrival of Fr. Joseph Gough to assist Fr. Pierre Sagna, Rector of the new Junior Seminary at Fajara. [Later, Fr. Sagna became Bishop of St. Louis du Sénégal, and Fr. Gough became Principal of St. Augustine's High School].

19th August, 1979: Fr John Hogan was appointed District Superior of the Holy Ghost Fathers (Spiritans) and Parish Priest at Bakau.

15th September, 1979: Sr. Madeleine Mendy, first Gambian vocation to the Presentation Sisters, took her final vows.

21st September, 1987: Blessing by the Vicar-General, Fr. Vincent Comer, of the Cluny Sisters' Convent at Barra.

5th August, 1999: Opening of St. Andrew's, Berending.

13th September, 2003: Death in Britain of Coleridge Wallace ('Sonnie') Cole, former Director of Education, WAEC Representative in London, and Headmaster of Marina International School, Fajara.

1st August, 2006: Fr. Joseph Karbo succeeded Sr Philomena Barry as Director of GPI.

11th August, 2006: Farewell at the Catholic Educational Secretariat to the Assistant Education Secretary, Br Milton Lawrence. He had worked in The Gambia since 1988, his posts including the headship of Our Lady of Fatima High School Bwiam.

28th August, 2006: The Presentation Sisters in The Gambia, who since 1968, had been attached to the Region of Senegal, were reconstituted as a mission linked to the Generalate of their Congregation in Rome.

8th August, 2007: Death of Sebastian Njie, Executive Director of the National Youth Service Scheme, Chairman of the Catholic Education Commission and Chairman of the Board of St Peter's Senior Secondary School, Lamin.

15th August, 2007 (Sang Marie): Bishop Ellison convened an Assembly for the Diocese of Banjul to be held from 30th March to 4th April, 2008.

20th August, 2007: Bishop Ellison appointed Fr. David Jimoh Jarju as Vicar-General of the Diocese of Banjul.

25th September, 2007: Death in Britain of Antoine Nicholas Tabbal ('CB'), prominent businessman.

18th-29th August, 2008: A course for new teachers was conducted by the Catholic Education Secretariat.

21st September, 2008: During tree-felling at St. Francis' Nursery School, Tranquil, the new D20,000 roof and newly acquired furniture were damaged.

22nd August, 2009: Fr. Michael Murray CSSp died in Dublin at the age of 64, after a protracted illness. During his service in the Diocese of Banjul, beginning in 1972, he was variously Parish Priest at Holy Spirit Banjul, chemistry master at St. Augustine's High School, Parish Priest at Basse, Vocations Director, and Director of the Junior Seminary.

8th September, 2009: Fr. Joseph Karbo blessed 'Nazareth', a grotto at the Presentation Sisters' compound in Brikama.

21st September, 2009: Death of Dermot Roach, Irish layman, who, since the 1990s, had helped many students. He worked at Fatima School, Bwiam before retiring to Kunkujang-Mariama.

5th August, 2010: The Blessed Sacrament Choir of Kanifing visited Dakar to give a concert and sing at the Cathedral.

17th September, 2010: Pupils of St. John Vianney's School, Bulock, took part in a live television link with London as part of a programme in which Pope Benedict XVI, then visiting Britain, addressed Britain's school children.

24th September, 2010: A GPI workshop was held for priests and others on the forthcoming new English translation of the Mass.

15th September, 2011: Sr. Jeanne-Thérèse of the Cluny Sisters celebrated the golden jubilee of her profession.

During September, 2011: Three priests arrived to serve the diocese: Fr. Jean-Marie Faye, Fr. Job Addai CSSp and Fr. Frederick Agama CSSp.

10th August, 2013: St. Martha's Society celebrated its fortieth anniversary.

17th August, 2013: Bishop Robert Ellison, Fr. Jean-Noël Faye and Fr. Yenes Manneh took part in Sang Marie celebrations in Atlanta, Georgia, USA.

10th September, 2013: Death of the long-serving catechist, 'OJ' – Matthew Jarjou.

21st - 28th September, 2013: The Knights of St Peter & St Paul hosted the Biennial Council Meeting of the International Alliance of Catholic Knights.

1st September, 2015: In retirement in Ireland, Bishop Emeritus Michael Cleary CSSp celebrated his 90th birthday.

30th August, 2017: A fire at the Junior Seminary at Lamin, attributed to an electrical fault, caused considerable damage to the multi-purpose hall.

1st September, 2020: Death of Mr. George F. Gomez, fondly called Uncle George, in Banjul, The Gambia. He was born in Bathurst on September 17th, 1938. He was a practising Catholic Christian. He played key roles in the church, especially during mega events. He was a lover of sports from his teens and known well in the GNOC (Gambia National Olympic Committee) for his contribution to the sports.

6th September, 2021: Death of Rev. Fr. Emile Sambou in Banjul, The Gambia. The Vigil, mass and burial rites were done at St. Therese's Parish, Kanifing on 16th and 17th September, 2021 and interment at Banjul Cemetery.

19th September, 2022: Funeral and burial service of Queen Elizabeth II of England, age 96 at St. George's Chapel in Windsor. She died on September 8th, 2022.

30th September, 2022: Death of Uncle Henry Gomez, a dear colleague of GPI, who worked in the production unit for many years until his untimely death at the age of 69 years.

couples retreat

20 23

RENEWAL OF MARRIAGE VOWS, COUPLES' FUN DAY OUT AND DAILY SESSIONS ON COMMUNICATIONS IN MARRIAGE TOOK PLACE AT GAMBIA PASTORAL INSTITUTE

FROM JULY 7TH - 9TH 2023



Couples retreats are a great opportunity to restore relationships while having a unique romantic getaway, without the hustle and bustle of your daily life. The retreat is a chance to take time away from work, kids, and daily chores; to look inward and focus on each other.

During the retreat, the facilitator gathered information about relationship or marriage from couples through structured interviews, and helped them recognize and clarify couples' retreat goals.

In addition to a special journey to the depths of personality and relationships, couples enjoyed outstanding recreational opportunities, fine dining options, and a quiet time in the serenity of GPI.





Dining and Recreational activities undertaking



Retreat coordinators: Fr. Peter Lopez, Fr. Yenes Manneh & Mrs Joanna Mendy

God, the best maker of all marriages, Combine your hearts into one.

In A Separate Engagement Our CRE Coordinator got married in Nigeria on 22nd July, 2023

Mr Obi Lazarus Enwelani & Theresa Ugochukwu



Wishing both of you all the love & happiness in the world
Congratulations

“Happy is the man who finds a true friend, and far happier is he who finds that true friend in his wife.” —*Franz Schubert*

Marriage – the roots are deep, the covenant is solid, love is sweet, life is hard, and God is good.



Daily Mass Readings**August & September****1 August, 2023 – Tuesday**

Alphonsus Liguori, Bishop, Religious Founder, Doctor
 Obligatory Memorial
 First Reading: [Exodus 33](#): 7-11; 34: 5b-9, 28
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 103](#): 6-7, 8-9, 10-11, 12-13
 Gospel: [Matthew 13](#): 36-43

2 August, 2023 – Wednesday

Ordinary Weekday/ Eusebius of Vercelli, Bishop/ Peter
 Julian Eymard, Priest
 First Reading: [Exodus 34](#): 29-35
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 99](#): 5, 6, 7, 9
 Alleluia: [John 15](#): 15b
 Gospel: [Matthew 13](#): 44-46

3 August, 2023 – Thursday

Ordinary Weekday
 First Reading: [Exodus 40](#): 16-21, 34-38
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 84](#): 3, 4, 5-6a and 8a, 11
 Alleluia: [Acts 16](#): 14b
 Gospel: [Matthew 13](#): 47-53

4 August, 2023 – Friday

John Mary Vianney, Priest Obligatory Memorial
 First Reading: [Leviticus 23](#): 1, 4-11, 15-16, 27, 34b-37
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 81](#): 3-4, 5-6, 10-11ab
 Alleluia: [First Peter 1](#): 25
 Gospel: [Matthew 13](#): 54-58

5 August, 2023 – Saturday

Ordinary Weekday/ Optional Memorial of the Blessed
 Virgin Mary/ Dedication of the Basilica of Saint Mary
 Major in Rome
 First Reading: [Leviticus 25](#): 1, 8-17
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 67](#): 2-3, 5, 7-8
 Alleluia: [Matthew 5](#): 10
 Gospel: [Matthew 14](#): 1-12

6 August, 2023 – Sunday

Transfiguration of the Lord Feast
 First Reading: [Daniel 7](#): 9-10, 13-14
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 97](#): 1-2, 5-6, 9
 Second Reading: [Second Peter 1](#): 16-19
 Alleluia: [Matthew 17](#): 5
 Gospel: [Matthew 17](#): 1-9

7 August, 2023 – Monday

Ordinary Weekday/ Sixtus II, Pope, Martyr, &
 Companions, Martyrs/ Cajetan, Priest
 First Reading: [Numbers 11](#): 4b-15
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 81](#): 12-13, 14-15, 16-17
 Alleluia: [Matthew 4](#): 4
 Gospel: [Matthew 14](#): 13-21

8 August, 2023 – Tuesday

Dominic, Priest, Religious Founder Obligatory
 Memorial
 First Reading: [Numbers 12](#): 1-13
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 51](#): 3-4, 5-6ab, 6cd-7, 12-13
 Alleluia: [John 1](#): 49b
 Gospel: [Matthew 14](#): 22-36 or [Matthew 15](#): 1-2, 10-14

9 August, 2023 – Wednesday

Ordinary Weekday/ Teresa Benedicta of the Cross,
 Virgin, Martyr
 First Reading: [Numbers 13](#): 1-2, 25 – 14: 1, 26a-29a, 34-35

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 106](#): 6-7ab, 13-14, 21-22, 23
 Alleluia: [Luke 7](#): 16
 Gospel: [Matthew 15](#): 21-28

10 August, 2023 – Thursday

Lawrence, Deacon, Martyr Feast
 First Reading: [Second Corinthians 9](#): 6-10
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 112](#): 1-2, 5-6, 7-8, 9
 Alleluia: [John 8](#): 12bc
 Gospel: [John 12](#): 24-26

11 August, 2023 – Friday

Clare, Virgin, Religious Founder Obligatory Memorial
 First Reading: [Deuteronomy 4](#): 32-40
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 77](#): 12-13, 14-15, 16 and 21
 Alleluia: [Matthew 5](#): 10
 Gospel: [Matthew 16](#): 24-28

12 August, 2023 – Saturday

Ordinary Weekday/ Optional Memorial of the Blessed
 Virgin Mary/ Jane Frances De Chantal, Married
 Woman, Religious Founder
 First Reading: [Deuteronomy 6](#): 4-13
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 18](#): 2-3a, 3c-4, 47 and 51
 Alleluia: [Second Timothy 1](#): 10
 Gospel: [Matthew 17](#): 14-20

13 August, 2023 – Sunday

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
 First Reading: [First Kings 19](#): 9a, 11-13a
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 85](#): 9, 10, 11-12, 13-14
 Second Reading: [Romans 9](#): 1-5
 Alleluia: [Psalms 130](#): 5
 Gospel: [Matthew 14](#): 22-33

14 August 2023 – Monday

Maximilian Mary Kolbe, Priest, Martyr Obligatory Memorial
 First Reading: [Deuteronomy 10](#): 12-22
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 147](#): 12-13, 14-15, 19-20
 Alleluia: [Second Thessalonians 2](#): 14
 Gospel: [Matthew 17](#): 22-27

15 August, 2023 – Tuesday – Vigil

Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Solemnity/ Vigil
 First Reading: [First Chronicles 15](#): 3-4, 15-16; 16: 1-2
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 132](#): 6-7, 9-10, 13-14
 Second Reading: [First Corinthians 15](#): 54b-57
 Alleluia: [Luke 11](#): 28
 Gospel: [Luke 11](#): 27-28

15 August, 2023 – Tuesday – Day

Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Solemnity/ Day
 First Reading: [Revelation 11](#): 19a; 12: 1-6a, 10ab
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 45](#): 10, 11, 12, 16
 Second Reading: [First Corinthians 15](#): 20-27
 Gospel: [Luke 1](#): 39-56

16 August, 2023 – Wednesday

Ordinary Weekday/ Stephen of Hungary, Married Man
 First Reading: [Deuteronomy 34](#): 1-12
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 66](#): 1-3a, 5 and 8, 16-17
 Alleluia: [Second Corinthians 5](#): 19
 Gospel: [Matthew 18](#): 15-20

17 August, 2023 – Thursday

Ordinary Weekday

First Reading: [Joshua 3](#): 7-10a, 11, 13-17Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 114](#): 1-2, 3-4, 5-6Alleluia: [Psalms 119](#): 135Gospel: [Matthew 18](#): 21 – 19: 1**18 August, 2023 – Friday**

Ordinary Weekday

First Reading: [Joshua 24](#): 1-13Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 136](#): 1-3, 16-18, 21-22 & 24Alleluia: [First Thessalonians 2](#): 13Gospel: [Matthew 19](#): 3-12**19 August, 2023 – Saturday**

Ordinary Weekday/ Optional Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary /John Eudes, Priest, Religious Founder

First Reading: [Joshua 24](#): 14-29Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 16](#): 1-2a and 5, 7-8, 11Alleluia: [Matthew 11](#): 25Gospel: [Matthew 19](#): 13-15**20 August, 2023 – Sunday**

Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: [Isaiah 56](#): 1, 6-7Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 67](#): 2-3, 5, 6, 8Second Reading: [Romans 11](#): 13-15, 29-32Alleluia: [Matthew 4](#): 23Gospel: [Matthew 15](#): 21-28**21 August, 2023 – Monday**

Pius X, Pope Obligatory Memorial

First Reading: [Judges 2](#): 11-19Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 106](#): 34-35, 36-37, 39-40, 43ab and 44Alleluia: [Matthew 5](#): 3Gospel: [Matthew 19](#): 16-22**22 August, 2023 – Tuesday**

Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary Obligatory Memorial

First Reading: [Judges 6](#): 11-24aResponsorial Psalm: [Psalm 85](#): 9, 11-12, 13-14Alleluia: [Second Corinthians 8](#): 9Gospel: [Matthew 19](#): 23-30**23 August, 2023 – Wednesday**

Ordinary Weekday/ Rose of Lima, Virgin

First Reading: [Judges 9](#): 6-15Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 21](#): 2-3, 4-5, 6-7Alleluia: [Hebrews 4](#): 12Gospel: [Matthew 20](#): 1-16**24 August, 2023 – Thursday**

Bartholomew, Apostle Feast

First Reading: [Revelation 21](#): 9b-14Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 145](#): 10-11, 12-13, 17-18Alleluia: [John 1](#): 49bGospel: [John 1](#): 45-51**25 August, 2023 – Friday**

Ordinary Weekday/ Louis of France, Married Man/ Joseph Calasanz, Priest, Religious Founder

First Reading: [Ruth 1](#): 1, 3-6, 14b-16, 22Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 146](#): 5-6ab, 6c-7, 8-9a, 9bc-10Alleluia: [Psalms 25](#): 4b, 5aGospel: [Matthew 22](#): 34-40**26 August, 2023 – Saturday**

Ordinary Weekday/ Optional Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary

First Reading: [Ruth 2](#): 1-3, 8-11; 4: 13-17Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 128](#): 1b-2, 3, 4, 5Alleluia: [Matthew 23](#): 9b, 10bGospel: [Matthew 23](#): 1-12**27 August, 2023 – Sunday**

Twenty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: [Isaiah 22](#): 19-23Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 138](#): 1-2a, 2bc-3, 6, 8Second Reading: [Romans 11](#): 33-36Alleluia: [Matthew 16](#): 18Gospel: [Matthew 16](#): 13-20**28 August, 2023 – Monday**

Augustine, Bishop, Doctor Obligatory Memorial

First Reading: [First Thessalonians 1](#): 1-5, 8b-10Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 149](#): 1b-2, 3-4, 5-6a and 9bAlleluia: [John 10](#): 27Gospel: [Matthew 23](#): 13-22**29 August, 2023 – Tuesday**

Martyrdom of John the Baptist Obligatory Memorial

First Reading: [First Thessalonians 2](#): 1-8Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 139](#): 1-3, 4-6Alleluia: [Matthew 5](#): 10Gospel: [Mark 6](#): 17-29**30 August, 2023 – Wednesday**

Ordinary Weekday

First Reading: [First Thessalonians 2](#): 9-13Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 139](#): 7-8, 9-10, 11-12abAlleluia: [First John 2](#): 5Gospel: [Matthew 23](#): 27-32**31 August, 2023 – Thursday**

Ordinary Weekday

First Reading: [First Thessalonians 3](#): 7-13Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 90](#): 3-5a, 12-13, 14 and 17Alleluia: [Matthew 24](#): 42a, 44Gospel: [Matthew 24](#): 42-51

1 September, 2023 – Friday

Ordinary Weekday

First Reading: [First Thessalonians 4](#): 1-8Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 97](#): 1 and 2b, 5-6, 10, 11-12Alleluia: [Luke 21](#): 36Gospel: [Matthew 25](#): 1-13**2 September, 2023 – Saturday**

Ordinary Weekday/ Optional Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary

First Reading: [First Thessalonians 4](#): 9-11Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 98](#): 1, 7-8, 9Alleluia: [John 13](#): 34Gospel: [Matthew 25](#): 14-30**3 September, 2023 – Sunday**

Twenty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: [Jeremiah 20](#): 7-9Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 63](#): 2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9Second Reading: [Romans 12](#): 1-2Alleluia: [Ephesians 1](#): 17-18Gospel: [Matthew 16](#): 21-27

4 September, 2023 – Monday

Ordinary Weekday/ Labor Day

First Reading: [First Thessalonians 4](#): 13-18Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 96](#): 1 and 3, 4-5, 11-12, 13Alleluia: [Luke 4](#): 18Gospel: [Luke 4](#): 16-30**5 September, 2023 – Tuesday**

Ordinary Weekday

First Reading: [First Thessalonians 5](#): 1-6, 9-11Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 27](#): 1, 4, 13-14Alleluia: [Luke 7](#): 16Gospel: [Luke 4](#): 31-37**6 September, 2023 – Wednesday**

Ordinary Weekday

First Reading: [Colossians 1](#): 1-8Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 52](#): 10, 11Alleluia: [Luke 4](#): 18Gospel: [Luke 4](#): 38-44**7 September, 2023 – Thursday**

Ordinary Weekday

First Reading: [Colossians 1](#): 9-14Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 98](#): 2-3ab, 3cd-4, 5-6Alleluia: [Matthew 4](#): 19Gospel: [Luke 5](#): 1-11**8 September, 2023 – Friday**

Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Feast

First Reading: [Micah 5](#): 1-4a or [Romans 8](#): 28-30Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 13](#): 6ab, 6cGospel: [Matthew 1](#): 1-16, 18-23**9 September, 2023 – Saturday**

Peter Claver, Priest, Religious, Missionary Obligatory Memorial

First Reading: [Colossians 1](#): 21-23Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 54](#): 3-4, 6 and 8Alleluia: [John 14](#): 6Gospel: [Luke 6](#): 1-5**10 September, 2023 – Sunday**

Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: [Ezekiel 33](#): 7-9Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 95](#): 1-2, 6-7, 8-9Second Reading: [Romans 13](#): 8-10Alleluia: [Second Corinthians 5](#): 19Gospel: [Matthew 18](#): 15-20**11 September, 2023 – Monday**

Ordinary Weekday

First Reading: [Colossians 1](#): 24 – 2: 3Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 62](#): 6-7, 9Alleluia: [John 10](#): 27Gospel: [Luke 6](#): 6-11**12 September, 2023 – Tuesday**

Ordinary Weekday/ Holy Name of Mary

First Reading: [Colossians 2](#): 6-15Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 145](#): 1b-2, 8-9, 10-11Alleluia: [John 15](#): 16Gospel: [Luke 6](#): 12-19**13 September, 2023 – Wednesday**

John Chrysostom, Bishop, Doctor Obligatory Memorial

First Reading: [Colossians 3](#): 1-11Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 145](#): 2-3, 10-11, 12-13abAlleluia: [Luke 6](#): 23abGospel: [Luke 6](#): 20-26**14 September, 2023 – Thursday**

Exaltation of the Holy Cross Feast

First Reading: [Numbers 21](#): 4b-9Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 78](#): 1bc-2, 34-35, 36-37, 38Second Reading: [Philippians 2](#): 6-11Gospel: [John 3](#): 13-17**15 September, 2023 – Friday**

Our Lady of Sorrows Obligatory Memorial

First Reading: [First Timothy 1](#): 1-2, 12-14Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 16](#): 1b-2a and 5, 7-8, 11Gospel: [John 19](#): 25-27 or [Luke 2](#): 33-35**16 September, 2023 – Saturday**

Cornelius, Pope, Martyr, and Cyprian, Bishop, Martyr Obligatory Memorial

First Reading: [First Timothy 1](#): 15-17Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 113](#): 1b-2, 3-4, 5a and 6-7Alleluia: [John 14](#): 23Gospel: [Luke 6](#): 43-49**17 September, 2023 – Sunday**

Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: [Sirach 27](#): 30 – 28: 7Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 103](#): 1-2, 3-4, 9-10, 11-12Second Reading: [Romans 14](#): 7-9Alleluia: [John 13](#): 34Gospel: [Matthew 18](#): 21-35**18 September, 2023 – Monday**

Ordinary Weekday

First Reading: [First Timothy 2](#): 1-8Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 28](#): 2, 7, 8-9Alleluia: [John 3](#): 16Gospel: [Luke 7](#): 1-10**19 September, 2023 – Tuesday**

Ordinary Weekday/ Januarius, Bishop, Martyr

First Reading: [First Timothy 3](#): 1-13Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 101](#): 1b-2ab, 2cd-3ab, 5, 6Alleluia: [Luke 7](#): 16Gospel: [Luke 7](#): 11-17**20 September, 2023 – Wednesday**

Andrew Kim Taegon, Priest, Martyr, Paul Chong Hasang, Catechist, Martyr, & Companions, Martyrs Obligatory Memorial

First Reading: [First Timothy 3](#): 14-16Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 111](#): 1-2, 3-4, 5-6Alleluia: [John 6](#): 63c, 68cGospel: [Luke 7](#): 31-35**21 September, 2023 – Thursday**

Matthew, Apostle, Evangelist Feast

First Reading: [Ephesians 4](#): 1-7, 11-13Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 19](#): 2-3, 4-5Gospel: [Matthew 9](#): 9-13**22 September, 2023 – Friday**

Ordinary Weekday

First Reading: [First Timothy 6](#): 2c-12Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 49](#): 6-7, 8-10, 17-18, 19-20Alleluia: [Matthew 11](#): 25Gospel: [Luke 8](#): 1-3

23 September, 2023 – Saturday

Pio of Pietrelcina, Priest Obligatory Memorial

First Reading: [First Timothy 6](#): 13-16Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 100](#): 1b-2, 3, 4, 5Alleluia: [Luke 8](#): 15Gospel: [Luke 8](#): 4-15**24 September, 2023 – Sunday**

Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: [Isaiah 55](#): 6-9Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 145](#): 2-3, 8-9, 17-18Second Reading: [Philippians 1](#): 20c-24, 27aAlleluia: [Acts 16](#): 14bGospel: [Matthew 20](#): 1-16a**25 September, 2023 – Monday**

Ordinary Weekday

First Reading: [Ezra 1](#): 1-6Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 126](#): 1b-2ab, 2cd-3, 4-5, 6Alleluia: [Matthew 5](#): 16Gospel: [Luke 8](#): 16-18**26 September, 2023 – Tuesday**

Ordinary Weekday/ Cosmas and Damian, Martyrs

First Reading: [Ezra 6](#): 7-8, 12b, 14-20Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 122](#): 1-2, 3-4ab, 4cd-5Alleluia: [Luke 11](#): 28Gospel: [Luke 8](#): 19-21**27 September, 2023 – Wednesday**

Vincent De Paul, Priest, Religious Founder Obligatory Memorial

First Reading: [Ezra 9](#): 5-9Responsorial Psalm: [Tobit 13](#): 2, 3-4a, 6, 8Alleluia: [Mark 1](#): 15Gospel: [Luke 9](#): 1-6**28 September, 2023 – Thursday**

Ordinary Weekday/ Wenceslaus, Martyr/ Lawrence Ruiz, Married Man, Martyr, & Companions, Martyrs

First Reading: [Haggai 1](#): 1-8Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 149](#): 1b-2, 3-4, 5-6a and 9bAlleluia: [John 14](#): 6Gospel: [Luke 9](#): 7-9**29 September, 2023 – Friday**

Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Archangels Feast

First Reading: [Daniel 7](#): 9-10, 13-14or [Revelation 12](#): 7-12abResponsorial Psalm: [Psalm 138](#): 1-2ab, 2cde-3, 4-5Alleluia: [Psalms 103](#): 21Gospel: [John 1](#): 47-51**30 September, 2023 – Saturday**

Jerome, Priest, Doctor Obligatory Memorial

First Reading: [Zechariah 2](#): 5-9, 14-15aResponsorial Psalm: [Jeremiah 31](#): 10, 11-12ab, 13Alleluia: [Second Timothy 1](#): 10Gospel: [Luke 9](#): 43b-45

THE DIOCESE OF BANJUL NEWSLETTER

APPEAL FOR SUPPORT

We have a small favor to ask. Many people are beginning to turn to the Diocese of Banjul Newsletter for vital, independent, and quality journalism. Therefore, readers around the world now need to support us financially.

We would like to invite you to join the myriad of readers who have taken the step to support us financially – keeping us open to all, and fiercely independent. In 2021, this support assisted in sustaining our work in diverse spheres. It enabled diligent, fact-checked, authoritative journalism to thrive in an era of falsehood, sensation, hype and breathtaking misinformation and misconception. In 2022, we will be no less active.

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Every contribution, however big or small, powers our journalism and sustains our future. Support the Banjul Newsletter for as little as any amount.

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Thank you.



8th August: St. Dominic

DOMINIC was a Spaniard, born in 1170 in Castille. In 1196, he joined a religious community. On a visit to southern France, he gathered a group of preachers (Dominicans) to travel in barefoot poverty. In 1206, he founded a convent of sisters converted from heresy. He became a friend of St. Francis of Assisi, and in 1216, received approval for his order from Pope Honorius III. Dominic established theological schools at two of his houses. He died in 1221 and was canonised in 1234.

9th August: St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross

ST. TERESA BENEDICTA of the Cross, also known as St Edith Stein, was born into a Jewish family at Breslau (then in Germany, now Wroclaw, Poland). From being an atheist, Edith was baptised in 1922. In 1934, she was received into the Carmelite Order. Although she moved from Germany to the Netherlands, Edith was arrested in 1942 and sent to Auschwitz concentration camp, where she died in the gas chamber. Edith was beatified by Pope John Paul II in 1987 and canonised by him in 1998. Edith Stein is remembered for her attempts to use knowledge to promote peace and understanding in the face of hatred and war.

14th August: St. Maximilian Kolbe, *martyr*

ST. MAXIMILIAN KOLBE (born 1894) was a Polish Franciscan priest. Ordained in 1918, he founded the City of Mary Immaculate religious centre in 1927, becoming its Superior, as well as director of Poland's chief Catholic publishing house. He was arrested by the Nazi Gestapo in 1939, and again in 1941, on charges of helping Jews and the Polish underground resistance movement. He was imprisoned at Warsaw, then transferred to the extermination camp at Auschwitz. When a fellow inmate was condemned to death in reprisal for another prisoner's escape, Fr. Kolbe volunteered to take the condemned man's place. He was beatified by Pope Paul VI in 1971 and canonised in 1982 by Pope John Paul II, who declared him 'patron saint of our difficult [20th] century'.

21st August: St. Pius X, *pope*

POPE PIUS X was born Guiseppe Sarto in Lombardy, Italy, the second of 10 children of a postman. After a poverty stricken childhood, he was granted a seminary scholarship and was ordained in 1858. He helped the sick in the cholera plague that swept northern Italy in the early 1870s and struggled to bring religious instruction to young people who did not have the opportunity to attend Catholic schools. In 1884, Pope Leo XIII appointed him Bishop of Mantua, and in 1893, Cardinal Patriarch of Venice. Patriarch Sarto avoided political involvement and devoted himself to social work. After Leo's death in 1903, he was elected Pope, taking the name Pius X. His pontificate was

notable for his implacable opposition to 'modernism'. But in other ways, Pius was a reformer. He restructured the Roman Curia and established seminaries. Pius died in August 1911. He was beatified by Pius XII in 1952 and canonised in 1954.

27th August: St. Monica, *matron*

MONICA, a fifth-century saint, is regarded as a model mother. She devoted her life to her son Augustine, guiding him towards his conversion, as related in Augustine's *Confessione* (autobiography). Monica died on her way home to North Africa, a few days after her son had been baptised by St. Ambrose.

28th August: St. Augustine of Hippo, *doctor*

AUGUSTINE taught rhetoric in Carthage (near modern Tunis). After moving to Milan, he converted to Christianity and returned to Africa to pursue a contemplative life. In 396, he was made Bishop of Hippo (now Annaba, in Algeria), a post he held until his death in 430. Augustine's writings have had great influence until this day. They include the *Confessione*, 'The City of God', and sundry theological works.

3rd September: St. Gregory the Great, *pope & doctor*

GREGORY lived from 540 to 604, a period notable for the expansion of the Church. He came from a rich family, but abandoned a career in politics, and gave away his possessions to become a monk. He founded monasteries and represented successive popes in Constantinople before being invited to become Pope himself. Gregory was a great administrator. He wrote theological works, insisted on priestly celibacy, reformed the calendar and the liturgy, and established choir schools where 'Gregorian chant' was taught.

5th September: St. Teresa of Calcutta, *religious*

TERESA (born in Albania in 1910) founded the Missionaries of Charity in Calcutta in 1950. For over 45 years, she ministered to the poor, sick, orphaned and dying, while guiding the Missionaries of Charity's expansion, first throughout India, and then in other countries. By the 1970s, Mother Teresa was internationally famed as an advocate for the poor and helpless. In 1979, she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, and in 1980, India's highest civilian honour, the *Bharat Ratna*. After her death in 1997, Teresa was beatified by Pope John Paul II and canonised by Pope Francis. *The Missionaries of Charity have worked in The Gambia since 1994.*

13th September: St. John Chrysostom, *doctor*

JOHN was born in 347 at Antioch, Syria. After brilliant studies, he became a hermit. When his health gave way, he returned to Antioch, was ordained, and as a preacher, won

many converts. 'Chrysostom' means 'golden mouthed'. He angered the rich by his concern for the poor, and was banished to Armenia. He later died on the way to a more distant exile on the Black Sea.

20th September: St. Andrew Kim Tae-gon, *martyr of Korea*

CATHOLICISM took root in Korea in the late 18th century. When French missionaries arrived in 1830, they found that Catholicism was already being practised. Kim Tae-gon's father was martyred for being a Catholic. Kim - or Andrew—was baptised when he was 15, and ordained nine years later in Shanghai, China. He returned to Korea as the first Korean priest, at a time when thousands of Christians were being persecuted. In 1846, aged 25, Fr. Tae-gon was beheaded near Seoul. His last words were, 'Become Christians if you want to be happy after death...'. In May 1994, during a visit to Korea, Pope John Paul II, now St. John Paul II, canonised Andrew Kim Tae-gon and 103 other Korean martyrs.

23rd September: St. Pius of Pietrelcina (*'Padre Pio'*) *priest*

PIO was born in southern Italy in 1887. Until he was 10, he worked on his family's farm, attending Mass and saying the rosary daily. His father went to the USA to pay for Pio to be tutored and enter the Capuchin Order. Pio was ordained in 1910. After the First World War, he became spiritual director at the mountain friary, where he lived until his death. Pio suffered poor health, and believed that the love of God was inseparable from suffering. In

September 1968, he died. In 2002 he was canonised by Pope John Paul II (now St. John Paul II).

27th September: St. Vincent de Paul, *priest*

VINCENT was of peasant stock. Captured by pirates, he spent two years in Tunis as a slave. After his escape, he devoted his life to succouring the poor. He founded the Congregation of Mission Priests (called Lazarists, after the Church of St. Lazare in Paris). He died in 1660 and was canonised in 1737. Vincent is patron of charitable work and societies.

30th September: St. Jerome, *doctor*

JEROME was born around 341 in Venetia, Italy. He travelled throughout France and became a monk. After a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, he retired to the Syrian desert, where he lived as a hermit. He returned to Rome in 382 as secretary to Pope Damasus, who ordered him to produce the standard Latin text of the Bible (the *Vulgate*, or 'People's Bible') from Hebrew and Greek sources. Jerome spent over 15 years on the task. He died in 420 and was buried in Jerusalem. The Council of Trent (1545-63) revised the Vulgate and declared it the approved text for Catholic use. (The English translation most often used in our present-day Missal is the Jerusalem Bible, though other translations may be used.)

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intercedete pro nobis.

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August & September

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Our Sunday Readings

6th August, 2023, *Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord*

1st Reading: Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 97:1-2, 5-6, 9
2nd Reading: 2 Peter 1:16-19
Alleluia: Matthew 17:5C
Gospel: Matthew 17:1-9

Homily Theme: The Transfiguration of Jesus on the Mountain – Mark 9:2-10, Matthew 17:1-9, Luke 9:28B-36

Verse of the Day Reflection: The transfiguration of Jesus Christ was a very powerful moment in the course of His earthly ministry when the divine nature and glory, which He possessed prior to coming to earth in the human body, was manifested in front of the three disciples, Peter James and John. Jesus was transformed into a form that nothing on earth could make dirty. It was a form that we can call heavenly. We also see that He was communicating with Elijah and Moses, people we know are in heaven.

So, why was the transfiguration important to Jesus and to the apostles? God Himself took the form of man and came down to earth as His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. So, after Jesus began to gather His disciples for His ministry, He performed many miracles in front of them, and the disciples also performed miracles in His name. He told them that He was the Messiah and that He came from God. But three years into the ministry, He told them that He will be persecuted and will die, but Peter said that they would not let that happen. Jesus was upset and told Peter that he is thinking like an earthly man, and not of what is heavenly. So, Jesus had to manifest Himself to a form that He was, He is, and will always be, because He is really God, so that the disciples could finally believe that He really is God and not a mortal man.

After this powerful transfiguration, they all descended to the bottom of the mountain and found the rest trying, but in vain, to drive out a demon out of a man. Jesus confirms their wavering faith in Him by telling them that their dwindling faith is the cause of their inability to drive out demons. Let us, therefore, have unwavering faith in Jesus, because we are lucky to know that He is, indeed, the messiah, who came to save us from our sins.

Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, we believe that You are our Lord and Saviour. We pray that You rekindle our faith and trust in You, so that we may continue with the work that You have commanded us to do. Amen.

13th August, 2023 *Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A*

1st Reading: 1 Kings 19:9A, 11-13A
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 85:9, 10, 11-12, 13-14

2nd Reading: Romans 9:1-5
Alleluia: Psalm 130:5
Gospel: Matthew 14:22-33

Homily Theme: Jesus Walks on Water – Matthew 14:22-36; Mark 6:45-56; John 6:16-24

Verse of the Day Reflection: St. Peter recognizes Jesus and immediately knows that He is the Lord. He gathers courage and tells Jesus, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” Jesus, in His eternal goodness, invites Peter to come. This is a very good example of how our relationship with the Lord should be. We should always, like St. Peter, trust that Jesus is almighty and all-powerful. Peter actually walks for a distance, but after the sea gets more stormy, his faith in Jesus’ power begins to falter. He begins to sink, but alas! Jesus is right there to rescue him.

This story of Peter and Jesus is the exact replica of our own life experiences. It shows us how often we make resolutions of how we will live under the power of Jesus, but when worldly troubles overwhelm us, we forget that Jesus is there for us. We lose faith in Jesus and start falling into the trap of our own fear and insecurities. There are times we will have our faith high and sometimes low. But the constant thing is that Jesus, in His everlasting mercy, goodness, and compassion, will always be there for us, to lift us up when our faith falters and we cry out to Him for help. Therefore, examine your conscience and understand how and when you falter in your faith in Jesus Christ. Once you understand, you will always remember to cry out for help to Jesus, when you are in problems, and also give praise and glory to Him during calmness and tranquility.

Prayer: Lord, hold my hand all the time especially when my faith falters. Help me to always turn to you in all circumstances, and always trust that you will be there reaching out for my hand, because you are my protector and my refuge. Amen.

20th August, 2023 *Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A*

1st Reading: Isaiah 56:1, 6-7
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8
2nd Reading: Romans 11:13-15, 29-32
Alleluia: Matthew 4:23
Gospel: Matthew 15:21-28

Homily Theme: Lord, Even Dogs Eat Scraps That Fall From The Table of Their Masters – Matthew 15:21-28, Mark 7:24-30

Verse of the Day Reflection: Jesus was preaching to all the nations during His ministry here on earth. He did not

discriminate against anybody regardless of their tribe. He preached the Good News of the Kingdom of Heaven extensively, in the regions of Tyre and Sidon, where He often visited. You should not get confused by the statement from Jesus that, “It is not right to take the food of the children and throw it to the dogs.” Jesus did not actually want to demean the people of Tyre and Sidon that they are inferior to the people of Israel, but He wanted to critically test the faith of the woman. He wanted to know if the woman really believed that He was the Son of God. If the woman did not have faith, she would have retorted and defended herself and her people. She actually rose above that perceived insult by Jesus and stuck to her faith and believed that Jesus would heal her daughter. This great faith by the woman prompted Jesus to grant her wish, and her daughter was healed of the demon that had invaded her. So, what does this reading teach us today? It teaches us that God can use anything possible to test our faith in Him. I know everyone is familiar with the phrase “One calamity followed close on the heels of another.” It means, when trouble strikes it is followed closely by another and another, until it seemed as if God has forsaken you. Maybe, when this happens, God is testing your faith in Him. If you crack under pressure, He will know you have dwindling faith. If you stand strong and say that, may God be praised during good and bad times, then you will be rewarded tenfold of what you may have lost.

Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, We confirm our faith in You that You are the Saviour of the world. Continue showering us with Your Graces and Mercies, so that our faith in You may never dwindle. Amen.

27th August, 2023

Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

1st Reading: Isaiah 22:19-23

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 138:1-2, 2-3, 6, 8

2nd Reading: Romans 11:33-36

Alleluia: Matthew 16:18

Gospel: Matthew 16:13-20

Homily Theme: But Who Do You Say That I Am? – Matthew 16:13-19, Luke 9:18-22

Verse of the Day Reflection: Jesus Christ says that the knowledge that Simon Peter had was Heaven-sent, meaning his anointing and appointment were sanctioned from Heaven by God the Father. Peter was anointed and appointed to head the Church of Christ, despite many shortcomings that a true human being has. This can be exemplified by the many instances that Jesus Christ had to rebuke and reprimand him. The best thing about Peter was that, he would examine his conscience and repent or be so sorry for the wrongs he had done. He did not also shy away from confronting a situation or a problem when faced with one. He had the inner power to right his wrongs. This may be the reason why he became the perfect leader of the early Church, because he was able to ably handle the myriad of problems the Church faced. With this strong foundation formed by Peter and Paul, the Church of Christ has been able to withstand the storms that had rocked it during the early, middle, and new ages. Let us learn from Peter that, despite our human shortcomings, we are still invited by God to serve Him and His church throughout the world. God is not distracted by our human errors because He accepts us the way He created us. But He reminds us to

always seek forgiveness when we wrong others and Him and also forgive others who wrong us too.

Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, use us, like You used Simon Peter, to spread Your Gospel throughout the world and help us to always defend Your Church against attacks from the netherworld. Amen.

3rd September, 2023

Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

1st Reading: Jeremiah 20:7-9

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 63:2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9

2nd Reading: Romans 12:1-2

Alleluia: Ephesians 1:17-18

Gospel: Matthew 16:21-27

Homily Theme: Get Behind Me, Satan! You are an Obstacle to Me – Matthew 16:13-23, Mark 8:27-33

Verse of the Day Reflection: From that time on, Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer greatly from the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. Then Peter took Jesus aside and began to rebuke Him, “God forbid, Lord! No such thing shall ever happen to You.” He turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle to me. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do.”

Events that would culminate in our salvation had been prophesied before by the prophets. Then, here was Peter trying to tell Jesus that He would never let happen, what has already been planned in Heaven. Jesus got upset and told him to get behind Him, Satan, because what He was saying was not in tandem with what was already planned in Heaven. This dwindling of faith, especially by Peter, had to be restored during The Transfiguration, especially when the voice of God came from the cloud and said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.” The trio became witnesses of Jesus in His Heavenly manifestation. Let us, therefore, have an unwavering faith in Jesus because we are lucky to know that He is indeed the messiah who came to save us from our sins.

Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, we believe that You are our Lord and Saviour. We pray that You rekindle our faith and trust in You, so that we may continue with the work that You have commanded us to do. Amen.

10th September, 2023

Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

1st Reading: Ezekiel 33:7-9

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9

2nd Reading: Romans 13:8-10

Alleluia: 2 Corinthians 5:19

Gospel: Matthew 18:15-20

Homily Theme: Where Two or Three are Gathered in My Name, I Am in Their Midst – Matthew 18:15-20

Verse of the Day Reflection: We are lucky today, to be given a conflict resolution guideline by our Lord Jesus Christ. This guideline tells us the best route to take, when we want to correct our brothers and sisters, who are in the wrong. When you see that your brother has done something wrong, Jesus advises us to first approach the person alone. This one-on-one interaction is very effective and does not

leave emotional bruises when the matter is resolved. Also, there are some mistakes we make without knowing if they are wrong or right. These should be dealt with using this approach. When we are unable to resolve the problem alone, Jesus advises us to seek the help of another friend or two. It is universally accepted that two minds are better than one. Therefore, when we join ideas and solutions together, the problem will be easier to solve, and Jesus reminds us that when two or three are gathered together in His Name, He will be in their midst. Let us, therefore, pray together to God for our needs and they shall be granted to us as Jesus says that, if “two of you agree on earth about anything for which they are to pray, it shall be granted to them by my heavenly Father.”

Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, thank You for promising to be with us when we gather together in Your Name.

17th September, 2023

Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

1st Reading: Sirach 27:30-28:7

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 103:1-2, 3-4, 9-10, 11-12

2nd Reading: Romans 14:7-9

Alleluia: John 13:34

Gospel: Matthew 18:21-35

Homily Theme: Parable of the Unforgiving Servant – Matthew 18:21-35

Verse of the Day Reflection: Have you ever realized that it is easier to forgive than to ask for forgiveness? That is very interesting! This is because in forgiving, you have control of the outcome, but when asking for forgiveness, you are at the mercy of the forgiver. The forgiver has to feel convinced that you are truly sorry for your mistake. In this Parable of the Unforgiving Servant, the first debtor, at first, appeared to be sincere. He even fell down to his knees and pleaded with his master for leniency to be allowed more time to repay. The master, out of mercy and compassion, went an extra mile and forgave him the whole debt. It happened that the same debtor, whose debt was waived in full, was also owed some very small amount of money by another person. He met this person on the way, and contrary to expectations, instead of showing the same forgiveness, seized and choked him, demanding to be paid what he was owed. This servant was not truly sincere in his quest for forgiveness. This is because, even after he was forgiven a huge debt, he couldn't find it in his heart to forgive a small debt. If forgiveness is real, it should have a complete and real effect on us. It should make us ask for forgiveness from others, forgive others, receive forgiveness and repeat the same again and again. He has given this parable to assist you to gain more mercy and forgiveness.

Ask yourself, again and again, these hard questions, and slowly, slowly, God will free you from the burdens of resentment and anger.

Prayer: Dear Lord, give me the grace to acknowledge my sins. Grant me mercy in life and help me to become just, merciful, and forgiving toward others, without holding back any misgivings. Amen.

24th September, 2023

Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

1st Reading: Isaiah 55:6-9

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 145:2-3, 8-9, 17-18

2nd Reading: Philippians 1:20C-24, 27A

Alleluia: Acts 16:14B

Gospel: Matthew 20:1-16A

Homily Theme: Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard – Matthew 20:1-16

Verse of the Day Reflection: You know, when God created us, He gave each one of us a specific task to do here on earth and it is from accomplishing that task that we will get our reward. God gives each one of us our talents without comparing them to what He gives to another. He intends you to work with what He has given you, because to the one who is given less, less is expected from him, and to the one who is given more, more will be expected from him. So, we should not ask God why He gives us different measures of talents. In the parable above of the labourers in the vineyard, Jesus tells us that we should not be driven by jealousy and greed, because everything on earth belongs to God, and He does whatever He wills with it. He apportions His tasks and wages the way He wants and on the last day, He will demand results according to His agreement with you. This agreement is the measure of power, resources, strength, knowledge and grace that He avails to you, in order to do His work. The expectations in this parable seem very different from those we would expect, if we were working for a human being. Man expects a return on his investment by giving wages that are equivalent to work done or time taken. There is no generosity in earthly business, but in the Kingdom of God, it is the order of the day. Therefore, let us do God's work the best way we can with the power, resources, strength, knowledge and graces that He avails us, because our wages will not be equated to another person's work, but according to the agreement that He has with you.

Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, help us to do God's work in the best way possible, according to Your Holy Will. Give us Your strength and plenty of graces to accomplish our God-given tasks and get our wages in the Kingdom of Heaven. Amen.

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Cont'd from back page

so present throughout the lived history of mankind, are, more cosmically, images or signs of the structure of authority that lies behind all creation. Mankind naturally organizes its public life to ensure peaceful co-existence with others, to promote order and tranquility, and to foster the common good in a thousand ways. This secular response of establishing a structure to manage together what cannot be managed alone is universal and always includes certain leaders to represent the organized community. All of this has a religious equivalent. A sacred canopy hangs over the world. A timeless, divine mega-structure encompasses under itself all of the smaller, temporary civic structures. The man anointed as king, the woman crowned as queen, the order they impose through a just rule in a secular

polity, point to something else—an underlying, and overarching, sacred polity in which God rules His creation like a fatherly king. In this timeless theological union, the feminine presence is felt. The queen mother is there, interceding with her King-Son on behalf of His subjects. She worships with them but also receives their honor. The accolades directed at her are deflected, mirror-like, to the greater One to whom she is holy daughter, holy mother, holy spouse and holy queen, our life, our sweetness, and our hope.

Mary, Queen of the Universe, in your Son's Kingdom, the faithful struggle to be faithful and to be fruitful. We are under your regal yet maternal care. May we please both our King and Father, and you, our Queen and Mother, since all parents are deserving of their children's honor.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The National Catholic Pilgrimage Committee is pleased to inform you that Air Travel and Tours Agency Limited in collaboration with Fly Travel Agency Ltd. will take intending pilgrims to Two Nations Christian (Holy Land) or (Holy Sites) in Israel and Jordan from 15th October to 30th October, 2023.



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Queenship of Blessed Virgin Mary

The mother of a king is a queen who receives honor in her son's realm



Mary is both a queen and a mother, but she is more mother than queen. Mary's Queenship and "motherhood," or motherhood, spark to life simultaneously. In the very moment Mary becomes a mother at the Annunciation, she also becomes a queen. The Archangel Gabriel tells Mary that her Son will sit on "the throne of his ancestor David" and that "He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end" (Lk 1:32-33). Since Jesus is a king, and since He is conceived in the womb of Mary, and since in Israel the mother of a king was always a queen, (the daughter not necessarily so), Mary becomes a queen. Some texts from the early centuries of the Church call Mary the "domina," the female of "dominus," Latin for "master" or "Lord."

It is not royal blood, but her motherly relationship, that makes Mary a queen. And since nothing is excluded from the realm of Christ the King, Mary is the Queen of that same realm, including both heaven and earth. This realm was not earned through violent conquest or political machinations. The Kingdom of Christ the King was purchased through a blood sacrifice of the King Himself who died on the cross. Soldiers were not killed so that Christ could walk over their corpses on the battlefield in order to rule a vanquished people from a secular throne. No, of course not. Christ humbly allowed

Himself to be murdered so that He could rise forty hours later and ascend into heaven to be seated, like a king, at the right hand of the Father. (Kings sit. Their audience's stand.) Christ gives the world a new form of reigning, a reinterpretation of the words "I win!"

Mary is that heavenly queen in the mysterious vision of the Book of Revelation in which appears "a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars" (Rv 12:1-3). The complex symbolism of this crowned empress encompasses Mary, Israel, and the Church Herself. Mary's coronation, the Fifth Glorious Mystery of the rosary, has not been defined dogmatically but has been celebrated liturgically and depicted in art since early medieval times. The most ancient depiction of Mary as queen is a mosaic from the 500s in a small church in the historic center of Rome! But the feast day of her Queenship was only placed in the Church's calendar in 1954. Vatican II stated unequivocally that "Mary was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory, and exalted by the Lord as Queen of the universe..." (Lumen Gentium, 59). After the liturgical reforms of Vatican II, the octave of Mary's Assumption was abrogated but is still recalled in her Queenship being commemorated eight days after August 15, showing the link between the two celebrations.

Earthly kings, queens, and kingdoms,

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