

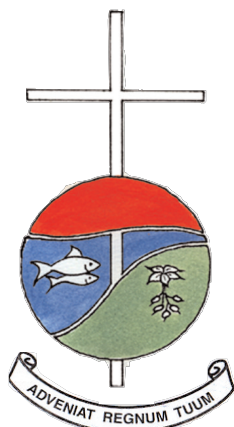


Meditations for Holy Week and Easter

Volume 39 No 2

APRIL / MAY 2015

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Diocese of Banjul NEWSLETTER

Incorporating The Catholic Newsletter



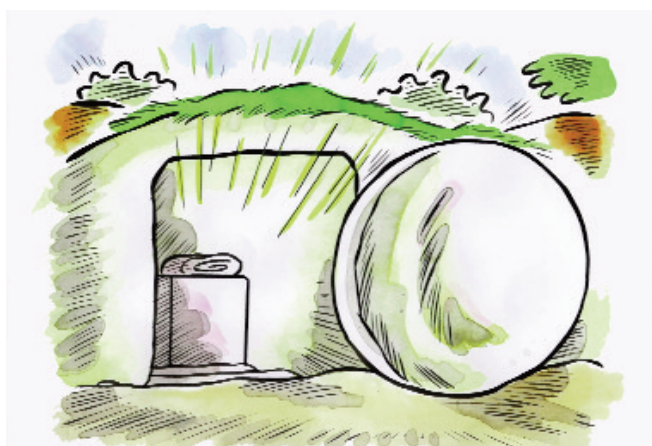
The Easter Triduum

Holy Thursday

Good Friday



Holy Saturday
&
Easter Sunday



Fr Anthony Gabisi
and
Fr Peter Gomez
celebrate
30 years as priests





Forthcoming celebrations

Christian

Palm Sunday	29th March
Easter Sunday	5th April
Ascension Day	Thursday 14th May
Pentecost	Sunday 24th May
Corpus Christi	Sunday 7th June
Sacred Heart	Friday 12th June
Orthodox Easter Sunday	12th April

Jewish

Pesach (Passover)	3rd - 11th April
Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement)	22nd - 23rd September

Muslim (approximate dates)

Ramadan begins	18th June
Lailat-al-Qadr ('Night of Power')	13th July
Eid-al-Fitr (Koriteh)	17th July
Eid-al-Adha (Tobaski)	23rd September
Al-Hijira (Islamic New Year 1437)	14th October
Milad-al-Nabi	21st December

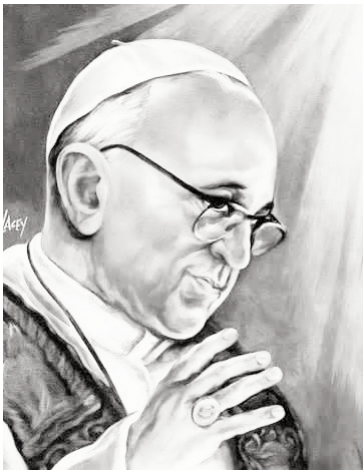
Why does the date of Easter vary from year to year?

IN the Catholic and other Western churches, Easter falls on a Sunday between 22nd March and 25th April, depending on the date of the first full moon after the spring equinox. The time was fixed after the Council of Nicaea in AD 325.

In the Eastern Orthodox Calendar, which uses a different calculation, Easter often falls later.

The dates of certain other observances in any year depend on the date of Easter that year. These are Ash Wednesday, Holy Week, Ascension Day (40 days after Easter), Pentecost (50 days after Easter), Trinity Sunday, Corpus Christi and Sacred Heart.

The dates of Easter Sunday for the next five years will be: 27th March 2016; 16th April 2017; 1st April 2018; 21st April 2019; and 12th April 2020.



The Pope's Prayer Intentions

April

- That people may learn to respect creation and to care for it as a gift of God.
- That persecuted Christians may feel the consoling presence of the Risen Lord and the solidarity of all the Church.

May

- That, rejecting the culture of indifference, we may care for our neighbours who suffer, especially the sick and the poor.
- That Mary's intercession may help Christians in secularised cultures to be ready to proclaim Jesus.

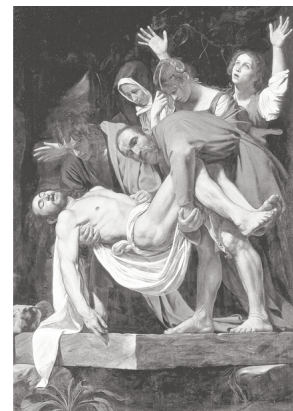
The Entombment of Christ

ON the back page of this *Newsletter* we reproduce the Italian artist Caravaggio's 'The Entombment of Christ', painted between 1603 and 1604

The painting was made for Santa Maria in Vallicella, Italy, but is now displayed in the Vatican Museums.

In the painting, the body of Christ is held by Nicodemus, who has his face to the viewer, and St John the Evangelist.

Behind them, Christ's mother Mary can be seen alongside Mary Magdalene, who is drying her tears with a white handkerchief, and Mary Cleophas, who raises her arms to the sky.



By way of introduction

We're all in this together



CHRISTIANS are sometimes described as 'resurrection people'. It's a fitting name, because Christ's death and resurrection and the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost are the reasons for the very existence of the Church. No Easter, no Church.

During Lent and the Easter Triduum we seek to deepen our understanding of Christ's suffering and death as the sacrifice of the Only Son of God, born of Mary, for the sins of the world. And we rejoice that Christ's resurrection accomplishes the triumph of love over sin and opens the gate of heaven to all believers.

Such sentiments are easy to write in a Catholic magazine. They are what readers expect. But piety is not enough. The fruits of Christ's short ministry were compassion and healing. His earthly mission completed, he assured his disciples: 'I am with you until the end of the world,' and commissioned them as his agents in spreading the Gospel.

That commission was extended to every member of the Church – first in Jerusalem, then progressively throughout the world. Today there are well over a billion Catholics and many millions of other Christians. We are commissioned to say our daily prayers of praise, thanksgiving, penitence, intercession and petition. We are commissioned every Sunday at the least to worship with the local Christian family – which for Catholics means participation in the Mass. We are commissioned to go out of our way to show respect and love

for everyone – even for those we don't care for; even our enemies. Faith in the resurrection means living for others, as Christ did.

Lent is ending, and we enter the long season of Easter Time, which terminates with Pentecost on 24th May. This doesn't mean we can relax and say, 'I gave up this or that for Lent,' and 'I prayed more than usual, and offered a helping hand to others: so now it's back to normal.'

Adult, baptised members of the Church should rejoice in the Lord of the Resurrection every single day.

If we proclaim – if we *know* – that Christ is at our side, life should be an exhilarating adventure. Our world is marred by indifference to God and by sin. Daily we hear of injustice and suffering. We are fortunate to live in a stable and tolerant society; but no society is free of sin, suffering and such ills as materialism, loneliness, ill-health and the encroachments of old age. The people of the resurrection should not shirk their mission to live for God and for others.

There are no backwaters in the universal Church of God. The Diocese of Banjul is no less part of the Church's mission than the Diocese of Rome.

Of course we may feel inadequate to the challenge to serve God and love others. But Christ is at our side. We should not hold back from asking God to create a new spirit within us.

May the light of the resurrection bring us hope, and may others recognise that we are indeed people of the resurrection,

Fight that
common cold!



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Must the
Mediterranean
become a Vast
Cemetery?

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Abode of peace – or distress?

THE EVENTS of Holy Week took place in one of the world's oldest cities: Jerusalem.

Jerusalem dates back to the fourth millennium BC, long before the arrival of the Jews.

'Jerusalem' means 'abode of peace'. But the city has been twice destroyed, 23 times besieged, 52 times attacked, and 44 times captured or recaptured. Conflict continues to this day.

Jerusalem became the 'City of David' about 1000 BC, when King David conquered its inhabitants and made it the capital of his twin kingdom of Judah and Israel.

At the time of Jesus, Jerusalem was much smaller than it is today - smaller than today's Banjul - with about 25,000 inhabitants (as opposed to 740,000 in Jerusalem today). It was surrounded by a six-and-a-half-kilometre wall pierced by massive gateways where tax collectors levied taxes on goods being taken into or out of the city.

Herod's embellishments

Since the conquest of Jerusalem in 63 BC by Pompey the Great, Jerusalem had been part of the Roman Empire. The Romans had established their client King, Herod, who ruled for 33 years, from 37 to 4 BC.

Herod is known as the king who ordered the slaughter of the innocents when Jesus was born. But he also did more than anyone since King Solomon to adorn Jerusalem with palaces, monuments and spectacular work on the Temple, which he began rebuilding in 19 BC.

The reconstruction of the Temple lasted 46 years - over forty years after Herod's death. Its courtyard served as a gathering-place, and its porticoes sheltered merchants and money-changers. A great door led to the Sanctuary, at the west end of which was the Holy of Holies.

The Temple was the centre of religious ritual. During Roman rule it was also the High Court of the *Sanhedrin*, the Jewish Council. Above all, the Temple was regarded as the dwelling-place of the Divine Presence.

Great crowds

At Jewish festivals such as Passover, Pentecost and Sukkoth, the population of Jerusalem was swollen by up to 500,000 pilgrims from all over Palestine and beyond. Excitement often led to anti-Roman demonstrations. Pilgrims were stirred up by nationalists or would-be Messiahs. The Roman governor made a point of being present during the festivals, and drafted in extra soldiers to preserve public order.

King Herod died in 4 BC. Subsequent riots in Jerusalem, notably at Pentecost, led to Roman reprisals and the crucifixion of three thousand around the city walls: crucifixion was by no means unique to Jesus.

The fateful week

At the beginning of what we call Holy Week, a small procession led by a man on a donkey came down from the Mount of Olives, through the Kidron Valley and into Jerusalem. There were cries of 'Hosanna', and some people

waved branches of palm trees. The man was Jesus, a prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.

As he drew near, Jesus wept. Jerusalem would not accept him, and in the not-too-distant future it would be surrounded by enemies and destroyed. (That was to happen in AD 70, when the Romans crushed a Jewish revolt. The Temple was never rebuilt; its site is now occupied by a Muslim shrine, the Dome of the Rock).

Straight to the Temple



Jesus entered the city and went straight to the Temple, where he drove out the money changers. It was the week before Passover, and Jesus spent a lot of time preaching in the Temple courtyard.

St Mark tells us that when the chief priests heard about Jesus' activities they resolved to get rid of him. Any threat to the Temple, especially during the emotional festival of Passover, was likely to lead to violence - which could result in dreadful Roman reprisals.

On the first day of the festival, Caiaphas the High Priest had Jesus arrested. He accused Jesus of vowing to destroy the Temple. But the witnesses could not agree, and the charge was dropped.

Caiaphas managed to get a conviction on a charge of blasphemy. The Jews did not have the authority to inflict capital punishment, so they sent Jesus to Pilate, the Roman governor.

Pilate's priority

Pilate wanted above all to preserve the peace, so although he found 'no harm' in Jesus, he had him scourged and condemned to death by crucifixion.

Jesus was forced to carry his cross through Jerusalem to a hill outside the city walls called *Golgotha* (place of the skull) or in Latin *Calvarius* (Calvary).

Victims of crucifixion could linger for hours, but Jesus died quite quickly.

As the Sabbath was approaching, his friends wanted to bury him before sundown, so Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the Sanhedrin, obtained Pilate's permission to inter the body in his own tomb, one of the new cave-like sepulchres cut into the hillside near Golgotha.

Meditations as we prepare for Good Friday...

The Last Words of Jesus on the Cross



THE FIRST WORD

‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do’
Luke 23:34

JESUS asks his Father to forgive the soldiers who have scourged, mocked and tortured him and nailed him to the cross. But is he not also asking forgiveness for his apostles and companions who have deserted him? For Peter, who has denied him three times? For the fickle crowd, who have called for him to be crucified?

Is he not also asking forgiveness for us, who so often forget him?

THE SECOND WORD

‘Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise’
Luke 23:43

IT is not only the religious leaders and the soldiers who mock Jesus, but even one of the two criminals who have been crucified with him. The other criminal speaks up for Jesus, saying that he and his fellow malefactor are receiving their just reward; yet ‘this man’ - Jesus - ‘has done nothing wrong’. Then he says to Jesus, ‘Remember me when you come into your kingdom.’

Jesus’ shows his divinity by opening heaven to a repentant sinner. What generosity to one who has only asked to be remembered!

THE THIRD WORD

Jesus said to his mother, ‘Woman, this is your son’
Then he said to his disciple, ‘This is your mother’
John 19:26-27

MARY is at Jesus’ side - by his cross - at the end of his ministry, just as she was present at the wedding in Cana when his ministry was beginning. What sorrow Mary must feel to see her Son mocked, tortured and crucified. A sword has pierced her soul, as prophesied so many years ago by Simeon when Mary took the infant Jesus to the Temple (Luke 2:35).

There are four at the foot of the cross: Mary; John; Mary of Cleopas, his mother’s sister; and Mary Magdalene. Jesus is speaking now to Mary and John. He is his mother’s only child, so he asks John, ‘the disciple whom Jesus loved’, to take care of her. And he commits John and the Church to Mary’s motherhood.

THE FOURTH WORD

‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’
Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34

IN Matthew’s and Mark’s Gospels this is Jesus’ only expression on the cross. Both Gospels relate that it is the ninth hour, after three hours of darkness, when Jesus cries out, quoting the opening words of Psalm 22, a plea to God for delivery. Jesus dies in agony, engulfed in others’ sins. The burdens of the sins of all mankind are on the verge of overwhelming his humanity.

Jesus dies alone: ‘For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all.’ (1 Timothy 2:5-6). But let us not forget that Psalm 22, so agonised and so desperate,

ends on a triumphant note: ‘Men shall tell of the Lord to the coming generation, and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn...’

THE FIFTH WORD

‘I thirst’
John 19:23

THE WOUNDS inflicted on Jesus in the scourging, the crowning with thorns, the long, painful and humiliating walk from Jerusalem to Golgotha, and the nailing to the cross, are taking their toll. He is thirsty. He is given vinegar - sour wine - to drink, possibly to dull his pain a little.

Here is a terrible paradox: Jesus, the ‘living water’, is himself thirsty. His humanity has been humiliated, his body abused and subjected to murderous pain. He truly suffers for us. This is the price he is paying to save us from our sins.

THE SIXTH WORD

‘It is finished!’
John 19:30

IT is finished. In Latin, *Consumatum est*: it is accomplished. By yielding up his spirit to the Father, Jesus has accomplished his earthly mission. For this he was born, he lived among us, he came to Jerusalem to suffer innocently and to die as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. In Jesus’ fear, his ultimate loneliness, he resembles each of us at the moment of death. But this is a death unlike all others: it is the very offering of absolute love by Jesus on behalf of sinful mankind.

THE SEVENTH WORD

‘Father, into your hands I commit my spirit’
Luke 23:46

THESE few last words of Jesus in St Luke’s account of Christ’s passion are a quotation from Psalm 31 (verse 5). This psalm, like Psalm 22, is an anguished cry for delivery, but it is also an expression of trust in God: ‘I have passed out of mind like one who is dead, I have become like a broken vessel. Yes, I hear the whispering of many - terror on every side - as they scheme together against me, as they plot to take my life. But I trust in you, O Lord. I say, “You are my God. My times are in your hand...”’

Jesus’ trust in his Father is absolute. Indeed, he has told his disciples, ‘I and the Father are one.’ (John 10:30). And he has told the disciples that he has come to Jerusalem to suffer and die in fulfilment of the Scriptures (Matthew 17:22-23).

Jesus’ death is his Father’s will. As Eucharistic Prayer II reminds us, ‘he entered willingly into his Passion’. Jesus willingly commits his whole self to his Father.

At Night Prayer throughout the year we echo the Psalmist and Jesus in the response:

V Into your hands I commend my spirit.

R You have redeemed us, Lord God of truth.

We should commit every day to God.

Our foremost example is Jesus, who at the moment of his last agony offered everything to God, and so triumphed over sin and death.

Here & there

NEWS FROM AROUND THE DIOCESE

Bishop Ellison attends installation of new Archbishop



BISHOP Robert Ellison and the Vicar-General of the Diocese of Banjul, Fr Emile Sambou, were present on 22nd February, the First Sunday of Lent, at the enthronement in the Cathedral of Notre Dame des Victoires, Dakar, of the newly-appointed Archbishop of Dakar, the Most Revd Benjamin Ndiaye (pictured left).

Archbishop Ndiaye was born in 1947 and ordained priest in 1977. He studied in Jerusalem and Paris. He became Bishop of Kaolack in June 2003, having been Vicar-General of the Archdiocese of Dakar. Last October, he took part in the Synod on the Family in Rome.

Archbishop Ndiaye takes over as Archbishop of Dakar from Cardinal Théodore Adrien Sarr, who stepped down in December last year after reaching the age of 75.

Cardinal Sarr (right) was appointed Archbishop in June 2000 by Pope John Paul II, succeeding Cardinal Hyacinthe Thiandoum, the first Senegalese bishop and Senegal's first cardinal. Cardinal Sarr was created cardinal in 2007 by Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI. In 2008 Pope Benedict named Monsignor Sarr as a member of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments.



There are seven dioceses: Dakar (archdiocese), Kaolack, Kolda, St Louis du Sénégal, Tambacounda, Thiès and Ziguinchor. The Bishops' Conference links Senegal with Mauritania, Cape Verde and Guinea Bissau.

In February 1992 Pope St John Paul II visited Senegal and The Gambia.

The population of Senegal is around 14 million, more than 90 per cent of whom are Muslim. The proportion of Catholics is about five per cent.

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Historic anniversary

ON 13th April 1985, in the Independence Stadium at Bakau, Bishop Michael Cleary ordained two young deacons, Anthony Gabisi and Peter Gomez, to the priesthood.

It was the first time the stadium had been used for a Catholic ceremony, and indeed, the ordination opened an exciting new chapter in the history of the Diocese of Banjul.

Fr Gabisi and Fr Gomez were the first Gambians to be made priests since the ordination of Fr Thomas Jobe in 1934, fifty-one years previously, and the first Gambian priests since the creation of the Diocese of Banjul in 1957.

Bishop Cleary had headed the diocese since 1981. He and his predecessor, Bishop Michael Moloney, had long worked and prayed for the day when the Irish missionary priests who had served the Catholic mission throughout the 20th century would be joined by priests from The Gambia itself.

Anthony Gabisi and Peter Gomez were both born in Banjul. In 1972, with around 18 other St Augustine's pupils, they were admitted to the newly-opened Junior Seminary at Fajara, housed in what is now the *École Française*.

'High-spirited'

The seminary was headed by Fr Pierre Sagna (later Bishop of St Louis in Senegal), assisted by Fr Joseph Gough, who had recently arrived from Ireland. Fr Gabisi describes the atmosphere in the seminary in those days as high-spirited.

Only four of those pioneering junior seminarians went on to St Paul's Major Seminary in Sierra Leone, and only two eventually became priests.

The seminary in Sierra Leone was also new. Fr Gomez speaks appreciatively of morale there, and describes the quality of the teaching as 'high'. Fr Gabisi remembers the football, volleyball and basketball he played when he wasn't studying philosophy and theology.

During their long vacations, the two Gambian seminarians undertook pastoral responsibilities, which Fr Gomez said he thoroughly enjoyed, especially in parts of The Gambia which were new to him.

Bishop Cleary had the great pleasure of travelling to Liberia to ordain Anthony Gabisi and Peter Gomez as deacons.

Fr Gabisi served his deaconate at the Cathedral in Banjul, where Fr William Cleary was Administrator.

Fr Gomez went to Kanifing, where the Parish Priest was Fr Brendan Smyth.

Fr Gabisi returned to the Cathedral as Assistant Priest, and Fr Gomez served at Kanifing. He and Fr Gabisi travelled on alternative weekends to celebrate Sunday Mass at Basse, where for a while there was no priest. The journey and the duties up-river added to their sense of adventure.

In the mid-80s, almost everyone in The Gambia thought of a priest as an Irish missionary, and it took time for some of the laity to address their new Gambian priests as 'Father'. But the two new young priests were welcomed and supported by their Irish colleagues.

Vicars-General

Over the past thirty years Fr Gabisi and Fr Gomez have served the pastoral needs of innumerable Gambians. As parish priests they have met the challenges of rural postings (Basse, for example) and the urban area (for example, in



A great day for Bishop Cleary, the ordinands and the diocese

The Gambia's largest parish, St Therese's Kanifing). Under Bishop Cleary, Fr Gomez served as Vicar-General for the western section of the diocese, while Fr Gomez, based in Soma, was Vicar-General of the eastern section.

Fr Gomez punctuated his ministry in The Gambia for a while to study Liturgy at St Patrick's College Carlo, in Ireland, and returned for further studies in Ireland in 2008, when he found the country much changed.

Fr Gabisi spent two years at Port Harcourt, Nigeria, studying for a master's degree.

At present, Fr Gabisi is Parish Priest at St Kizito's Bakoteh, and Fr Gomez is Parish Priest at Blessed Sacrament, Kanifing Estate.

Looking back, Fr Gabisi remarks on the great growth of the Catholic community in this country, and the 'mushroom' expansion in youth activities and among the laity generally, and of the enthusiasm of Catholic choirs. He has rejoiced in



Early days in Fr Gabisi's ministry

the many Gambian ordinations over the past thirty years (22 Gambian priests are now serving in the diocese, and others elsewhere).

Fr Gomez remarks that priests, like everyone else, experience ups and downs, but that he has never doubted the loving care of God.

Both men are enthusiastic about their present responsibilities, and look forward to continuing service for Christ and his Church in The Gambia.



Father Anthony and Father Peter with their Bishop



Fr Brendan Smyth welcomes his new colleagues

A Prayer for our Priests

GOD our Father, grant to our priests a firm faith, zeal in proclaiming the faith, and diligence in administering the Sacraments. May their life of prayer and service enable them to inspire and lead those committed to their care. We ask this through our High Priest, Jesus Christ our Lord



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The family and inter-religious dialogue

MANY appreciative comments followed the workshop at GPI on Friday 20th February on 'the family as agent for inter-religious dialogue'.

Among those participating were Bishop Ellison, priests, sisters and lay-people. The workshop was led by a Jesuit priest, Fr Norbert Litoing.

Fr Litoing comes from Cameroon. He has worked and studied in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Birmingham, England, and is now based in Senegal.

St Anthony's in song

THE CHOIR of St Anthony's Kololi gave their second annual concert at the Jamma Hall, Kairaba Beach Hotel, on Friday 30th January. The choir, of around 30 members, offered a varied programme of songs in Wolof, Serer, Jola and other languages, including Congolese Lingala and a song from South Africa. The organist was John Boisey and the guitarist Paul Gomez. Opening prayers were offered by Fr Emile Sambou.

Pilgrimage of reconciliation

ON a windy and dusty day, the third annual Lenten pilgrimage of reconciliation to the shrine of Our Lady Queen of Peace at Kunkujang Mariama took place on Saturday 28th February.

Large numbers of lay people, led by Bishop Ellison and many priests, recited the rosary, performed the Stations of the Cross and adored the Blessed Sacrament at Benediction.

The Bishop preached a homily, and priests heard confessions.

Women's Day of Prayer at Kololi

WOMEN'S World Day of Prayer was celebrated at St Anthony's Church, Kololi, on Friday 6th March. Materials for the service were those provided by women in the Bahamas to be used on that day in over 170 countries.

The Women's Day of Prayer brings together women of various races, cultures and traditions. Since 1927 the day has been known as Women's World Day of Prayer.

OBITUARY

Death of devoted veteran catechist



THE DEATH occurred on 2nd February (Candlemas) of the oldest catechist in the Diocese of Banjul, John Sambou.

John Alex Sambou was born in Lancaster Street Banjul on 16th October 1932, the second child of Paul and Marie Sambou.

He attended St John's Primary School and St Augustine's School to standard seven, and

then worked for the Gambia Ports Authority.

In the early 1970s he was posted to Farafenni (BambaTenda-YelliTenda, North Bank Region) and worked

May is the Month of Mary

Devotion to the Mother of Jesus fits very well with Easter Time, because Mary represents humanity raised to the glory of heaven with her risen Son

During the season of Easter Time, instead of the *Angelus*, we say the *Regina Coeli*:



*Regina caeli laetare, alleluia:
Quia quem meruisti portare, alleluia:
Resurrexit sicut dixit, alleluia:
Ora pro nobis Deum, alleluia.*

Orémus
*Grátiam tuam, quæsumus,
Dómine, méntibus nostris infúnde;
ut qui, Ángelo nuntiánte,
Christi Fílii tui incarnatiónem cognóvimus,
per passiónem eius et crucem,
ad resurrectiόνis glóriam perducámur.
Per eúndem Christum Dóminum nostrum. Amen.*

Queen of heaven, rejoice, alleluia:
For he whom you were worthy to bear, alleluia:
Is risen as he promised, alleluia:
Pray for us to God, alleluia.

Let us pray.

O God, who through the resurrection of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, did vouchsafe to give joy to the world; grant, we beseech you, that through his Mother, the Virgin Mary, we may obtain the joys of everlasting life. Through the same Christ our Lord.

there until his retirement in 1982, when he took up a year's voluntary work as a catechist with the Diocese of Banjul.

In 1983 Mr Sambou began full-time work as a catechist with responsibility for Kuntaur and Kaur.

John Sambou was a devoted Catholic, down-to-earth, who always spoke his mind. He worked with many priests and sisters, and taught many youngsters, including Fr John Mendy.

For his services to the Church and community Mr Sambou was invited to Rome, where he was honoured by Pope John Paul II.

Mr Sambou is survived by his twin sister, other sisters, his daughter Marie Rose and his son Joe (Kalamba), together with many nephews and nieces.

His funeral was held at Holy Spirit Banjul on 9th February, followed by interment at Banjul Catholic Cemetery.



family circle

All too common

ALMOST everyone sometimes suffers a common cold – what, in The Gambia, we call a ‘fresh cold’.

In doctors’ language, the common cold is a viral infection that causes inflammation of the mucous membranes lining the nose and throat. In everyday words, it’s a stuffy, runny nose with perhaps a sore throat, headache and other discomforts.

Almost 200 viruses can cause a cold! You can catch one by

- * breathing in virus-infected droplets
- * rubbing your eyes or nose with fingers that have picked up a virus in hand-to-hand contact.
- * handling a contaminated object such as a towel.

Children suffer from more colds than adults. They may have as many as ten a year. The reason is that at school, children are exposed to many viruses to which they haven’t yet become immune.

Adults gradually build up an immunity to colds. On average an adult gets a cold two or three times a year, while an elderly person has only one cold a year, or none at all.

Signs and symptoms

Most fresh colds are confined to the nose and throat. The first sign is a tickle in the throat, a watery discharge from the nose, and sneezing. The discharge may become thick and yellow.

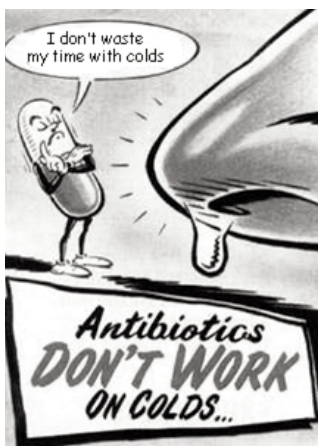
Other symptoms may develop: watering eyes, slight fever, sore throat, a cough, aching muscles and bones, headache, listlessness and chill.

Most colds clear up within a week or so. You should see a doctor if this doesn’t happen.

Treating a cold

Many people believe they can prevent colds by avoiding draughts and damp or by taking large doses of vitamin C. There is no scientific evidence that such measures work. But you do protect yourself if you avoid close contact with someone who is suffering from a cold.

There are no ‘cold cures’, though at pharmacies and supermarkets you can buy medicines to relieve the



symptoms. Most contain a mild painkiller such as paracetamol along with antihistamine and decongestant drugs. Some add vitamin C. Others contain caffeine, which is a mild stimulant.

Taking antibiotics is no use at all against colds, because they’re caused by viruses, not by bacteria!

But rest and quiet can enable your body to combat your cold and help recovery.

Why celebrate Easter with eggs?

EASTER eggs are colourfully-decorated eggs given in celebration of Easter.

Traditionally, dyed and painted chicken’s eggs were used, but nowadays many Easter eggs are made of chocolate, or are plastic eggs filled with sweets.

Eggs are a symbol of fertility and rebirth.

In Christianity, Easter eggs symbolise the empty tomb of Jesus: although an egg appears to be like the stone of a tomb, a bird hatches from it; similarly, the Easter egg is a reminder that Jesus rose from the grave, and that those who believe will also experience eternal life.

The practice of decorating eggs predates Christian traditions.

Ostrich eggs with engraved decoration that are 60,000 years old have been found in Africa. Decorated ostrich eggs, and representations of ostrich eggs in gold and silver, were commonly placed in graves of the ancient Sumerians and Egyptians as early as 5,000 years ago.

The Christian adaptation of decorating eggs can be traced back to the early Christians of Mesopotamia, who stained eggs red in memory of the blood of Christ.

‘The Roman Ritual’, first published in 1610, contains texts of much older date. Among the Easter blessings for lamb, bread and new produce, is the following blessing for eggs:

Lord, let the grace of your blessing + come upon these eggs, that they be healthful food for your faithful who eat them in thanksgiving for the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you for ever and ever.



Children and church at Easter

BEFORE you take your children to church during Holy Week and Easter, you should tell them about the ceremonies.

Your local parish may have made arrangements to instruct children. But in any case, you should tell your children about the palm procession, the washing of feet at the Mass of the Last Supper and the ceremonies of Good Friday and the Easter Vigil.

Do make sure that your children see that you, their parents, make going to church a top priority at Easter - and explain to them, in words they can understand, the reasons why.



You and your bike



Make sure that you and your bike are roadworthy.

Busy roads are unhealthy for cyclists and joggers because of fumes from car exhaust pipes. Consider wearing a mask. At first you may feel self-conscious, but you will protect your health. Masks don't cost much, and you can wash and re-use the filter. Examine the filter in your mask at the end of

a week and see how much muck it has trapped!

Many accidents to cyclists at night-time occur because they can't be seen. So have good lights and wear bright, reflective clothing. Fit reflectors on your bike.

If you carry bags on your bike, secure them on a luggage-rack. Don't fix them to your handle-bars: they could jam the spokes or, if heavy, unbalance the bike and cause an accident.

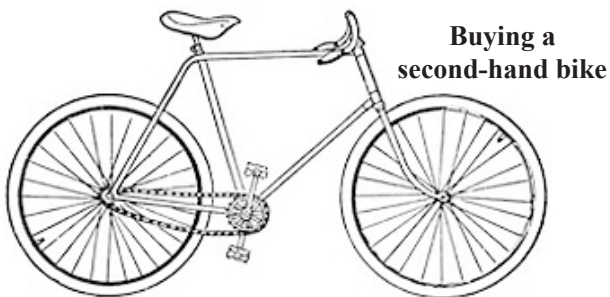
Whatever you do, don't carry a passenger on your crossbar: bicycles are designed to carry the rider only!

Many cyclists behave as though the rules of the road don't apply to them. They ride on the wrong side of the road, ignore traffic lights, don't make signals. All this is foolhardy: dangerous to the cyclist and all others on the road.

Don't use ear-phones while riding your bike, and don't weave in and out of heavy traffic unless you can clearly see ahead.

Never hold on to the back of a vehicle, and always keep your hands on your handlebars.

Happy cycling – and keep safe!



Choosing the correct size of a bike is essential, especially if you are buying a bike for a child. To gauge this, sit the child on the bicycle with the saddle and the handlebars at their lowest point. The child's feet should comfortably touch the ground on both sides.

Never, ever, allow a small child to cycle anywhere dangerous – for example, a main road.

If you want to buy a second-hand bicycle, check

- The spokes aren't bent
- The frame isn't twisted (which could indicate that the bike has been in an accident)
- The wheels aren't buckled, even slightly
- The brakes have effective gripping power and stop the bike immediately.
- The tyres aren't cracked (which could indicate that the bike hasn't been used for a while, and that the inner-tubes could be perished).

You should get a trustworthy bike-mechanic to check that a second-hand bicycle is entirely road-worthy.



Congratulations

Thursday 14th May 2015
The Ascension of the Lord
9th anniversary

of the Episcopal Ordination
of the Third Bishop of Banjul
The Right Reverend
Robert P. Ellison CSSp

Monday 13th April
30th anniversary

of the Ordination to the Priesthood
of Father Anthony Gabisi
and
Father Peter Gomez

During April four other diocesan priests celebrate their anniversaries

Friday 10th April: Fr Joseph Kabo (1999)
Fr Michael Ndecky (1999)

Sunday 12th April: Fr Edward Gomez (1986)
Sunday 26th April: Fr David Jimoh Jarju (1986)

Reminder

MANY Catholics who have been careless about regular attendance at Sunday Mass may wish to make a fresh start this Holy Week and Easter. For them, and for others, here's a reminder.

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.

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.



The Editor
& Staff
of the
Diocese
of Banjul
Newsletter

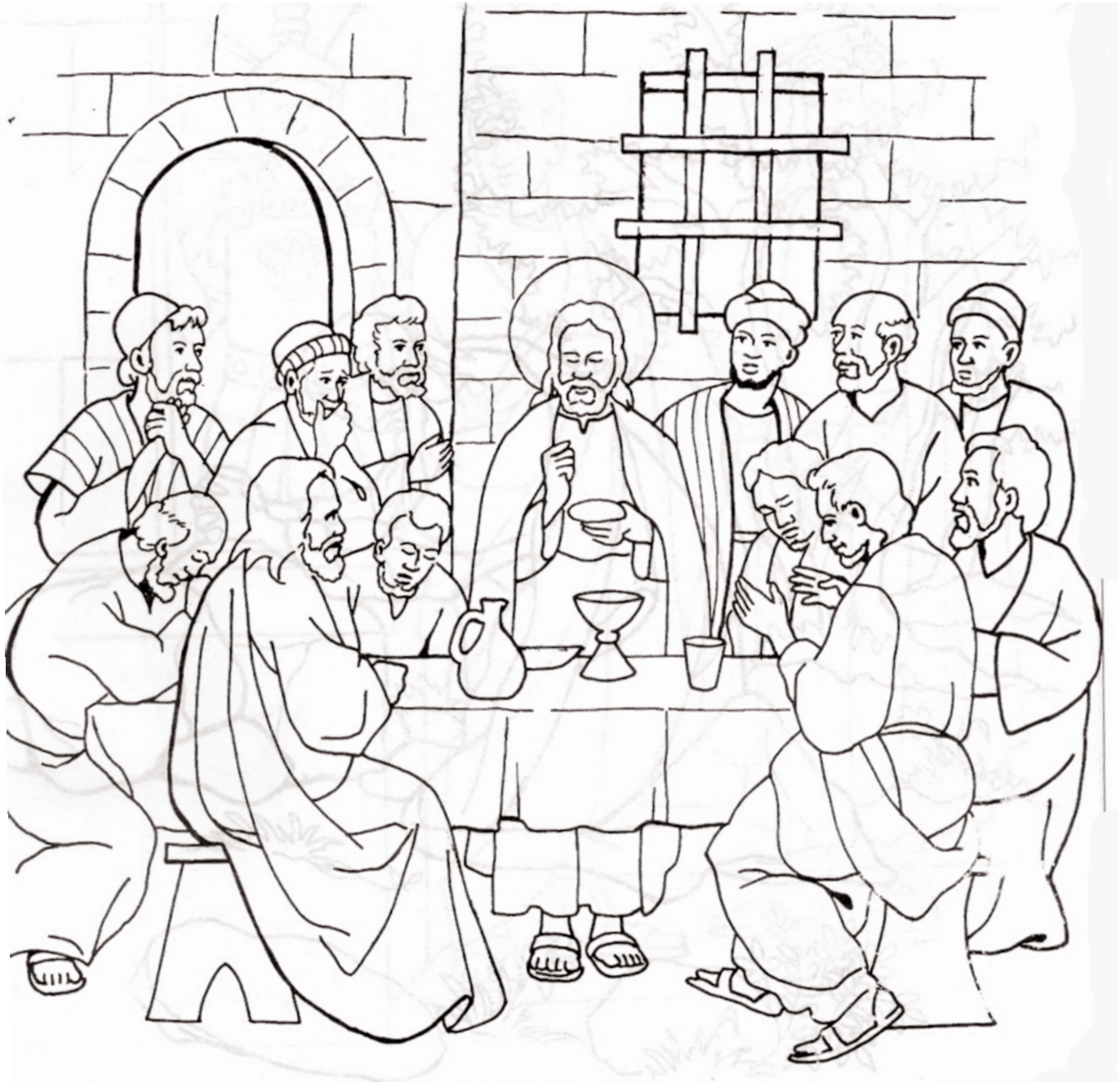


wish all readers

A Joyous Easter



CHILDREN'S PAGE



Jesus sat with his closest friends in an upper room to celebrate the Passover.

At this meal, Jesus took bread and blessed it. Then he took the cup of wine and blessed it.

He asked his disciples to do the same thing, in memory of him.

This is why, at every Mass, the priest takes bread and wine and blesses them.

Reflections

Reflections, readings and prayers
from Palm Sunday to Pentecost
including details for Holy Week & the Easter Triduum



29th March 2015

Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord

Humility, love and redemption

WE interpret the Old Testament by what has been revealed to us in the New Testament. Thus, today's First Reading, applied to Christ, depicts him as a willing sufferer: 'I did not hide my face from insult and spitting.'

But whenever Jesus spoke to his disciples about his forthcoming rejection, suffering and death they didn't want to hear about it. And today, just like the disciples, we may not want to face up to Jesus' death, nor the purpose of it.

Christ came into this world to humble himself, as today's Second Reading (from Philippians) reminds us. He offered himself to the Father for the sins of the world, including our own.

Today's Gospel Reading is a narrative of Christ's suffering and death. We should listen attentively and give thanks for God's love, in that he sent his Son into the world to take on himself all our sins and save us through his death and resurrection. May we make the best use of this Holy Week for our own souls' sake and for others.

The Mass is preceded by the Procession of Palms. The priest explains the significance of the procession: '...with all faith and devotion let us commemorate the Lord's entry into the city for our salvation, following in his footsteps...'

ALMIGHTY, ever-living God, sanctify + these branches with your blessing, that we, who follow Christ the King in exultation may reach the eternal Jerusalem through him...

An alternative prayer of blessing may be used.

Gospel Reading before the Procession: Mark 11:1-10
or John 12:12-16

During the procession, appropriate antiphons and hymns are sung.

Collect

ALMIGHTY, ever-living God, who as an example of humility for the human race to follow caused our Saviour to take flesh and submit to the Cross, graciously grant that we may heed his lesson of patient suffering, and so merit a share in his Resurrection...

Readings: Isaiah 50:4-7. Psalm 21:8-9,17-20,23-24.
Response: My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
Philippians 2:6-11.

Gospel acclamation: Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory. Christ was humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross. But God raised him high and gave him the name which is above all names...

Passion Gospel: Mark 14:1 – 15:47

Prayer over the Offerings

THROUGH the Passion of your Only-Begotten Son, O Lord, may our reconciliation with you be near at hand, so that, though we do not merit it by our own deeds, yet by this sacrifice, made once for all, we may feel already the effects of your mercy...

Preface

...for, though innocent, he suffered willingly for sinners, and accepted unjust condemnation to save the guilty. His Death has washed away our sins, and his Resurrection has purchased our justification...

Prayer after Communion

NOURISHED with these sacred gifts, we humbly beseech you, O Lord, that, just as through the Death of your Son you have taught us to hope for what we believe, so by his Resurrection you may lead us to where you call...

Prayer over the People

LOOK, we pray, O Lord, on this your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ did not hesitate to be delivered into the hands of the wicked, and to submit to the agony of the Cross...

30th March

Monday in Holy Week

The colour for the Masses from Monday to Wednesday (except for the Chrism Mass) is purple or violet

Collect

GRANT, we pray, almighty God, that though in our weakness we fail, we may be revived through the Passion of your Only-Begotten Son...

Readings: Isaiah 42:1-7, Psalm 26:1-3,13-14.

Gospel: John 12:1-11.

Prayer over the Offerings

LOOK graciously, O Lord, on the sacred mysteries we celebrate here, and may what you have mercifully provided to cancel the judgment we incurred bear for us fruit in eternal life...

Preface

... for the days of his saving Passion and glorious Resurrection are fast approaching, by which the pride of the ancient foe and the mystery of our redemption in Christ is accomplished...

Prayer after Communion

VISIT your people, O Lord, we pray, and with your ever-watchful love look upon the hearts dedicated to you by means of these sacred mysteries, so that under your protection we may keep safe this remedy of eternal salvation, which by your mercy we have received...

31st March

Tuesday in Holy Week**Collect**

ALMIGHTY ever-living God, grant us so to celebrate the mysteries of the Lord's Passion that we may merit to receive your pardon...

Readings: Isaiah 49:1-6. Psalm 71:1-6,15,17.

Gospel: John 13:21-33,36-38.

Prayer over the Offerings

LOOK favourably, O Lord, on these offerings of your family, and to those you make partakers of these sacred gifts, grant a share in their fullness...

Preface as yesterday (*Monday of Holy Week*)

Prayer after Communion

NOURISHED by your saving gifts, we beseech your mercy, Lord, that by this same Sacrament with which you have fed us in this present age, you may make us partakers of life eternal...

Tuesday Evening

Chrism Mass at the Cathedral

The colour for this Mass is white

At this Mass the clergy renew their vows and the holy oils are consecrated:

- **The Oil of Catechumens**, used before a candidate is baptised.
- **The Oil of the Sick**
- **The Oil of Chrism**, used at baptisms, ordinations, and the consecration of churches and altars.

**Collect**

O GOD, who anointed your Only-Begotten Son with the Holy Spirit, and made him Christ and Lord, graciously grant that being made sharers in his consecration, we may bear witness to his Resurrection in the world...

Readings: Isaiah 61:1-3,6,8-9. Psalm 88:21-22,25,27. Response: I will sing for ever of your love, O Lord. Revelation 1:3-8

Gospel acclamation: Praise to you, Christ, king of eternal glory! The spirit of the Lord has been given to me; he sent me to bring the good news to the poor.

Gospel: Luke 4:16-21

After his homily, the Bishop asks the priests to renew their vows.

Prayer over the Offerings

MAY the power of this Sacrifice, O Lord, we pray, mercifully wash away what is old in us and increase in us grace of salvation and newness of life...

Preface

...for by the anointing of the Holy Spirit you made your Only-Begotten Son High Priest of the new and eternal covenant, and by your wondrous design were pleased to decree that his one Priesthood should continue in the Church.

For Christ not only adorns with a royal priesthood the people he has made his own, but with a brother's kindness he also chooses men to become sharers in his sacred ministry through the laying on of hands.

They are to renew in his name the sacrifice of human redemption, to set before your children the paschal banquet, to lead your holy people in charity, to nourish them with the word and strengthen them with the Sacraments.

As they give up their lives for you and the salvation of their brothers and sisters, they strive to be conformed to the image of Christ himself and offer you a constant witness of faith and love...

Prayer after Communion

WE beseech you, almighty God, that those you renew by your Sacraments may merit to become the pleasing fragrance of Christ...

After the Chrism Mass, the priests take the Holy Oils to their parishes, where they are reverently reserved for use as needed.

1st April

Wednesday in Holy Week

On this day, we remember the betrayal of Jesus by Judas Iscariot for thirty pieces of silver.

Collect

O GOD, who willed your Son to suffer for our sake to the yoke of the Cross, so that he might drive from us the power of the enemy, grant us your servants to attain the grace of the Resurrection...

Readings: Isaiah 50:4-9. Psalm 68:8-10,21-22,31,33-34.

Gospel: Matthew 26:11-25

Prayer over the Offerings

RECEIVE, O Lord, we pray, the offerings made here, and graciously grant that, celebrating your Son's Passion in mystery we may experience the grace of its effects...

Preface as on Monday of Holy Week

Prayer after Communion

ENDOW us, almighty God, with the firm conviction that through your Son's death in time, to which the revered mysteries bear witness, we may be assured of perpetual life...



Morning of 3rd April
Thursday of Holy Week
No Mass is celebrated this morning

THE EASTER TRIDUUM



Evening of Holy Thursday: 3rd April

also known as Maundy Thursday

Mass of the Lord's Supper

This Mass commemorates Christ's institution of the Eucharist and the priesthood, and his 'new commandment' of love.

The tabernacle is empty. The priest wears white vestments. While the Gloria in excelsis is sung, church bells may be rung. They will not be rung again until the Gloria in excelsis at the Vigil on Saturday evening.

Collect

O GOD, who has called us to participate in this most sacred Supper, in which your Only-Begotten Son, when about to hand himself over to death, entrusted to the Church a sacrifice new for all eternity, the banquet of his love: grant, we pray, that we may draw from so great a mystery the fullness of charity and of life...

Readings: Exodus 12:1-8,11-14. Psalm 115:12-13,15-18. Response: The blessing cup that we bless is a communion with the blood of Christ. 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.

Gospel acclamation: Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus! I give you a new commandment: love one another as I have loved you, says the Lord...

Gospel: John 13:1-15

Following the homily, the priest washes the feet of selected members of the congregation while suitable songs are sung.

At the beginning of the Liturgy of the Eucharist, Ubi Caritas or another appropriate chant is sung.

Prayer over the Offerings

GRANT us, O Lord, we pray, that we may participate worthily in these mysteries, for whenever the memorial of this sacrifice is celebrated the work of our redemption is accomplished...



Preface

...for he is the true and eternal Priest, who instituted the pattern of an everlasting sacrifice and was the first to offer himself as the saving Victim, commanding us to make this offering as his memorial. As we eat his flesh that was sacrificed for us, we are made strong; and as we drink his Blood that was poured for us,

we are washed clean...

Prayer after Communion

GRANT, almighty God, that just as we are renewed by the Supper of your Son in this present age, so we may enjoy his banquet for all eternity...

After the Mass, the Blessed Sacrament is solemnly transferred to the Altar of Repose, while Pange Lingua is sung.

3rd April

Friday in the Lord's Passion

Good Friday is marked by fasting and abstinence.

At the beginning of the Liturgy the altar is bare. The priest, wearing red vestments, prostrates himself before the altar before going to his place for the Collect.

Collect

REMEMBER your mercies, O Lord, and with your eternal protection sanctify your servants, for whom Christ your Son, by the shedding of his Blood, established the Paschal Mystery...

An alternative Collect may be used.

Readings: Isaiah 52:13 - 53:12. Psalm 30:2,6,12-13,15-17, 25. Response: Father, into your hands I commend my spirit. Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9

Gospel acclamation: Glory and praise to you, O Christ!

Christ was humbler yet, even accepting death, death on a cross, but God raised him high and gave him the name which is above all names...

Passion Gospel: John 18:1 - 19:42



The Solemn Intercession

Before each prayer the deacon or priest may sing or say, Let us kneel (Flectmus genua), and all kneel briefly for silent prayer. Then the deacon or priest sings or says, Let us stand (Levate) and offers the prayer.

- 1 For the Holy Church
- 2 For the Pope
- 3 For the faithful
- 4 For catechumens
- 5 For the unity of Christians
- 6 For the Jewish people
- 7 For those who do not believe in Christ
- 8 For those who do not believe in God
- 9 For those in public office
- 10 For those in tribulation

The Veneration of the Holy Cross

The priest partly unveils the veiled cross and says or sings Behold the wood of the Cross, on which hung the salvation of the world. (Ecce lignum Crucis, in quo salus mundi pependit)

The people kneel and respond, Come, let us adore (Venite, adoremus)

The priest unveils the right arm of the cross, with the same invitation and response. Then he unveils the entire cross, with the invitation and response. The people come forward and venerate the cross, one by one. During the veneration the singing usually includes the Reproaches (ancient chants of rebuke for unfaithfulness and ingratitude) and Pange Lingua (Sing, my tongue, the glorious battle).

After the veneration the cross is placed on the altar. The Blessed Sacrament is carried from the Altar of Repose and placed on the altar. The priest genuflects and begins the Our Father, which is followed by the usual Communion Rite.

Prayer after Communion

ALMIGHTY ever-Living God, who have restored us to life by the blessed Death and Resurrection of your Christ, preserve in us the work of your mercy, that, by partaking of this mystery, we may live a life unceasingly devoted to you...

Prayer over the People

MAY abundant blessing, Lord, we pray, descend upon your people who have honoured the Death of your Son in the hope of resurrection: may pardon come, comfort be given, holy faith increase, and everlasting redemption be made secure...

4th April
Holy Saturday

(Easter Eve)

No Mass is celebrated this morning, though devotional services may be held.

It is strongly recommended that the fast of Good Friday be extended throughout Holy Saturday, while the Church waits, as it were, at the Lord's tomb. In this way, the Easter Vigil is all the more joyous.

THE EASTER VIGIL

THE EASTER VIGIL begins after nightfall on Saturday evening. The Vigil is the greatest observance of the entire Christian year: the 'Solemnity of Solemnities' and the 'Foretaste of the Everlasting Easter'.

There are four parts to the Vigil:

- The Service of Light**
- The Liturgy of the Word**
- The Liturgy of Baptism**
- The Liturgy of the Eucharist**



The Service of Light

The 'new fire' is blessed outside the church. Wearing white or gold vestments, the priest greets the people, then prepares the paschal candle and lights it from the fire. During the procession which follows, the priest three times lifts the candle high and sings Christ our Light (Lumen Christi) to which the people respond, Thanks be to God (Deo gratias).

*The paschal candle is placed in the sanctuary, and the deacon or priest sings the **Exsultet** : '...this is the night when Christ broke the chains of death, and rose triumphant from the grave...'*

The people stand with lighted candles.

The Liturgy of the Word

In the readings from Scripture, the Church, 'beginning with Moses and all the prophets', proclaims Christ's paschal mystery.

There are seven Old Testament readings, each followed by a responsorial psalm and a prayer. Some of these readings may be omitted, but the reading from Exodus is always proclaimed.

- 1 Genesis 1:1 – 2:4 (God our Creator)
- 2 Genesis 22:1-18 (Abraham's obedience)
- 3 Exodus 14:15 – 15:1 (Moses leads his people from Egypt)
- 4 Isaiah 54:5-14 (God's everlasting love)
- 5 Isaiah 55:1-11 (God's mercy and forgiveness)
- 6 Baruch 3:9-15,32 & 4:4 (Walking in God's ways)
- 7 Ezekiel 36:16-18 (We are God's people)

Following the Old Testament readings, the altar candles are lit and the priest intones Gloria in Excelsis. Church bells are rung.

Collect

O GOD, who made this most sacred night radiant with the glory of the Lord's Resurrection, stir up in your Church a spirit of adoption, so that, renewed in body and mind, we may render you undivided service...

Reading: Romans 6:3-11. Psalm 117:1-2,16-17,22-23.
Response: Alleluia, alleluia!

Gospel: Mark 16:1-7

After the Gospel, the homily, however brief, is not to be omitted.

The Liturgy of Baptism

If there any to be baptised, the Litany of the Saints is sung, and the priest blesses the water in the font. When the rite of baptism (and confirmation) has been completed, or if there is no baptism, after the blessing of the water, all stand with lighted candles and renew their baptismal promises.

The priest sprinkles the people with baptismal water while the antiphon I saw water (Vidi aquam) - Exodus 47:1-2,9 - is sung.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

Prayer over the Offerings

ACCEPT, we ask, O Lord, the prayers of your people with the sacrificial offerings, that what has begun in the paschal mysteries, may, by the working of your power, bring us to the healing of eternity...

Preface

IT is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, at all times to acclaim you, O Lord, but on this night above all to laud you yet more gloriously, when Christ our Passover has been sacrificed. For he is the true Lamb who has taken away the sins of the world. By dying he has destroyed our death, and by rising restored our life. Therefore, overcome with paschal joy, every land, every people exults in your praise, and even the heavenly powers, with the angelic hosts, sing together the unending hymn of your glory, as they acclaim...

Prayer after Communion

POUR out on us, O Lord, the Spirit of your love, and in your kindness make those you have nourished by this paschal Sacrament one in mind and heart...



5th April

Easter Sunday

Courage and excitement

'WE are witnesses,' cries St Peter in today's First Reading. Peter and his fellow disciples had experienced Christ's resurrection. 'He's alive! We've seen him!' This good news changed the disciples' lives, and with excitement and courage they passed it on to everyone who would listen. They were new men. As St Paul declares in the Second Reading, 'You have been brought back to true life with Christ.'

Today's Gospel Reading tells how Mary Magdalene arrived at Jesus' tomb before daybreak, found it empty, and ran to tell Peter and John that his body had been taken away. Peter and John ran to the tomb, and seeing the burial clothes were shocked into belief: yes, this resurrection on the third day was what Jesus had told them about! John 'saw and believed'.

Christ's resurrection is not just a pious belief. It is not simply a doctrine. It is a fact - the most welcome fact of life that we can ever know.

Christ is alive!

We encounter the risen Christ in our hearts. We meet him in the Church's prayer and worship.

Like our Lord's first followers, shout with joy! Tell all the world!



Collect

O GOD, who on this day through your Only-Begotten Son have conquered death and unlocked for us the gate to eternity, grant, we pray, that we who keep the Solemnity of the Lord's Resurrection may, through the renewal brought by your Spirit, rise up in the light of life...

Readings: Acts 10:34,37-43. Psalm 117:1-2,15-17,23-23.
Response: This day was made by the Lord; we rejoice and are glad. Colossians 3:1-4 or 1 Corinthians 3:6-8.

The Easter Sequence: *Victimae Paschali*

CHRISTIANS, to the Paschal Victim offer sacrifice and praise.

The sheep are ransomed by the Lamb; and Christ, the undefiled, hath sinners to his Father reconciled.

Death with life contended: combat strangely ended!

Life's own Champion, slain, yet lives to reign.

Tell us, Mary: say what thou didst see upon the way,

The tomb the Living didst enclose; I saw Christ's glory as he rose!

The angels there attesting, shroud with grave-clothes resting,

Christ, my hope, has risen: he goes before you into Galilee.

That Christ is truly risen from the dead, we know.

Victorious King, thy mercy show!

Latin version

Victimae paschali laudes immolent Christiani.

Agnus redemit oves: Christus innocens Patri reconciliavit peccatores.

Mors et vita duello confluxere mirando: dux vitae mortuus, regnat vivus.

Dic nobis Maria, quid vidisti in via? Sepulcrum Christi viventis, et gloriam vidi resurgentis:

Angelicos testes, sudarium, et vestes. Surrexit Christus spes mea: praecedet suos [vos] in Galilaeam.

Credendum est magis soli Mariae veraci Quam Judaeorum Turbae fallaci.

Scimus Christum surrexisse a mortuis vere: tu nobis, victor Rex, miserere.

Gospel acclamation: Alleluia...Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us: let us celebrate the feast, then, in the Lord.

Gospel: John 20:1-9 (or Mark 16:1-8, or at an evening Mass Luke 24:13-35)

Prayer over the Offerings

EXULTANT with paschal gladness, O Lord, we offer the sacrifice by which your Church is wonderfully reborn and nourished...

Preface I of Easter

IT is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, at all times to acclaim you, O Lord, but on this day above all to laud you yet more gloriously, when Christ our Passover has been sacrificed. For he is the true Lamb who has taken away the sins of the world. By dying he has destroyed our death, and by rising restored our life. Therefore, overcome with paschal joy, every land, every people exults in your praise, and even the heavenly powers, with the angelic hosts, sing together the unending hymn of your glory, as they acclaim...

Prayer after Communion

LOOK upon your Church, O Lord, with unfailing love and favour, so that, renewed by the paschal mysteries, she may come to the glory of the Resurrection...

12th April Second Sunday of Easter

Divine Mercy Sunday

The message for all time

HOW different is today's Church from the infant Church at the time of St Peter!

Peter's Church was so small that 'everything they owned was held in common'. Impossible, surely, in today's world, when there are well over a billion Catholics (over six million at the Pope's Mass in Manila in January!) Yet reading how the first Christians looked after each other is a reminder that most of us could do much more for the Church. Even more importantly, we need reminding that the message of the Church is the same as it was for St Peter, and will be until the end of time. By his resurrection, Christ sets us free. Many Christians can't quite believe it, or don't act on it.

Let us seek the risen Christ in prayer and sacrament and in everyone we meet. Then, like St Thomas, we shall exclaim, 'My Lord and my God!'

In today's Gospel reading we hear how Jesus greeted the disciples with 'Peace be with you,' and breathed the Holy Spirit upon them, conferring the power to forgive sins in his name. That peace, that gift of the Spirit and the Sacrament of Penance (Confession) have conferred immeasurable grace in the Church ever since.

Collect

GOD of everlasting mercy, who in the very re-currence of the paschal feast kindle the faith of the people you have made your own, increase, we pray, the grace you have bestowed, that all may grasp and rightly understand in what font they have been washed, by whose Spirit they have been reborn, by whose Blood they have been redeemed...

Readings: Acts 4:32-35. Psalm 117:2-4,15-18,22-24.
Response: Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, for his love has no end (or Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!) 1 John 5:1-6

The Easter Sequence Victimae Paschali may be sung (see opposite column)



Gospel acclamation: Alleluia... Jesus said, 'You believe because you can see me. Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe.'

Gospel: John 20:19-31.

Prayer over the Offerings

Accept, O Lord, we pray, the oblations of your people, that, renewed by confession of your name and by Baptism, they may attain unending happiness...

Prayer after Communion

GRANT, we pray, almighty God, that our reception of this paschal Sacrament may have a continuing effects in our minds and hearts..



19th April
Third Sunday of Easter

IN today's First Reading, Peter explains to the Jews why Christ died and why they must repent. In the Second Reading, St John gives the same message: Only through Christ are our sins forgiven.

'We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.'

Today's Gospel Reading relates how the apostles were talking about their Master's resurrection when Jesus himself appeared, saying, 'Peace be with you.' They were frightened, thinking he was a ghost. Jesus showed them his wounded hands and feet. He ate with them. He said that everything

about him had been foretold in Scripture, and declared: 'You are witnesses of these things.'

Like the apostles, we find in Moses, the prophets and the psalms a looking-forward to Jesus' death and resurrection. We know him in the breaking of bread - the Mass - and in the Sacrament of Penance. Here and now, in The Gambia, just like Peter and the first disciples, are Christ's beneficiaries and his witnesses.

Collect

MAY your people exalt for ever, O God, in renewed youthfulness of spirit, so that, rejoicing now in the restored glory of our adoption, we may look forward in confident hope to the rejoicing of the day of resurrection...

Readings: Acts 3:13-15, 17-19. Psalm 4:2, 4, 7, 9. Response: Lift up the light of your face on us, O Lord *or* Alleluia! 1 John 2:1-5.

Gospel acclamation: Alleluia.. Lord Jesus, explain the scriptures to us. Make our hearts burn within us as you talk to us.

Gospel: Luke 24:35-48

Prayer over the Offerings

RECEIVE, O Lord, we pray, these offerings of your exultant Church, and, as you have given her cause for such great gladness, grant also that the gifts we bring may bear fruit in perpetual happiness...

Preface: *the priest may use any of the five Prefaces below*

Prayer after Communion

LOOK with kindness upon your people, O Lord, and grant, we pray, that those you were pleased to renew by eternal mysteries may attain in their flesh the incorruptible glory of the resurrection...

Prefaces for Easter

- I It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, at all times to acclaim you, O Lord, but in this time above all to laud you yet more gloriously, when Christ our Passover has been sacrificed. For he is the true Lamb who has taken away the sins of the world. By dying he has destroyed our death, and by rising restored our life. Therefore, overcome with paschal joy, every land, every people exults in your praise, and even the heavenly powers, with the angelic hosts, sing together the unending hymn of your glory, as they acclaim...
- II It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, at all times to acclaim you, O Lord, but in this time above all to laud you yet more gloriously, when Christ our Passover has been sacrificed. Through him the children of light rise to eternal life and the halls of the heavenly Kingdom are thrown open to the faithful; for his Death is our ransom from death, and in his rising the life of all has risen. Therefore, overcome with paschal joy, every land, every people exults in your praise, and even the heavenly powers, with the angelic hosts, sing together the unending hymn of your glory, as they acclaim...
- III It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, at all times to acclaim you, O Lord, but in this time above all to laud you yet more gloriously, when Christ our Passover has been sacrificed. He never ceases to offer himself for us, but defends us and pleads our cause with you: he is the sacrificial Victim who dies no more, the Lamb, once slain, who lives for ever. Therefore, overcome with paschal joy, every land, every people exults in your praise, and even the heavenly powers, with the angelic hosts, sing together the unending hymn of your glory, as they acclaim...
- IV It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, at all times to acclaim you, O Lord, but in this time above all to laud you yet more gloriously, when Christ our Passover has been sacrificed. For, with the old order destroyed, a universe cast down is renewed, and integrity of life is restored to us in Christ. Therefore, overcome with paschal joy, every land, every people exults in your praise, and even the heavenly powers, with the angelic hosts, sing together the unending hymn of your glory, as they acclaim...
- V It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, at all times to acclaim you, O Lord, but in this time above all to laud you yet more gloriously, when Christ our Passover has been sacrificed. By the oblation of his Body, he brought the sacrifices of old to fulfilment in the reality of the Cross and, by commending himself to you for our salvation, showed himself the Priest, the Altar, and the Lamb of Sacrifice. Therefore, overcome with paschal joy, every land, every people exults in your praise, and even the heavenly powers, with the angelic hosts, sing together the unending hymn of your glory, as they acclaim...



3rd May Fourth Sunday of Easter

*Shepherd, corner-stone,
and expression of love*

IN Jesus's day, shepherds were familiar figures, so his hearers at once understood when he spoke of himself as 'the good shepherd'.

Our Lord Jesus knows his sheep as individuals, and is ready even to die for them.

In the First Reading, St Peter has another image for Jesus: he describes him as the cornerstone on whom the world's salvation depends. And in the Second Reading, St John says that Jesus is the expression of God's love, and that we shall one day see him 'as he is'.

Shepherd, cornerstone, revelation of love. No metaphor can truly sum up what Jesus is. But we have been given the essentials: namely, that Jesus loves and saves us, and that in return we are bound to love him, love our neighbour, and proclaim the good news.

Today is Vocations Sunday. We pray for vocations to the priesthood and the religious life. We pray also that each of us may serve Christ faithfully in our own sphere of life.

Collect

ALMIGHTY ever-living God, lead us to a share in the joys of heaven, so that the humble flock may reach where the brave Shepherd has gone before...

Readings: Acts 2:8-12. Psalm 117: 1,8-9,21-23,26,29-30. Response: The stone which the builders rejected has become the corner-stone *or* Alleluia! 1 John 2:1-2

Gospel acclamation: Alleluia...I am the good shepherd, says the Lord; I know my own sheep and my own know me.

Gospel: John 10:11-18

Prayer over the Offerings

GRANT, we pray, O Lord, that we may always find delight in these paschal mysteries, so that the renewal constantly at work within us may be the cause of our unending joy...

Preface: *the priest may use any of the five Prefaces for Easter (see bottom of opposite page).*

Prayer after Communion

LOOK upon your flock, kind Shepherd, and be pleased to settle in eternal pastures the sheep you have redeemed by the Precious Blood of your Son...

10th May Fifth Sunday of Easter

The vine

THE DISCIPLES were afraid when the newly-converted Saul (soon to be called Paul) attempted to join them, because they only knew of him as a ruthless persecutor of Christians. But Paul managed to convince them that the risen Christ had appeared to him, and that he was now a disciple himself.



What is the essence of the Gospel embraced by Paul? St John says, in today's Second Reading, that if we believe in God's love, and believe in and obey his Son Jesus, we shall receive, like Paul, the gift of the Holy Spirit. All who obey Jesus, says John, 'abide in him' - that is, live in Jesus.

Jesus himself, in today's Gospel Reading, tells his followers that he is the vine, and they are the branches.

In the Old Testament, the vine is often used as an image of Israel (Psalm 80:8-16, Isaiah 5:1-7). The image of the vine was used by the prophets to show that Israel had cut itself off from God and withered through rebellion and disobedience (Jeremiah 2:21). Jesus told his disciples: 'As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.'

We draw strength from Jesus and his Church through prayer, reading the Scriptures and celebrating the Eucharist.

Collect

ALMIGHTY ever-living God, constantly accomplish the Paschal Mystery within us, that those you were pleased to make new in Holy Baptism may, under your protective care, bear much fruit and come to the joys of life eternal...

Readings: Acts 9:26-31. Psalm 26-28,30-32. Response: You, Lord, are my praise in the great assembly *or* Alleluia! 1 John 3:18-24.

Gospel acclamation: Alleluia...Make your home in me, as I make mine in you. Whoever remains in me bears fruit in plenty.

Gospel: John 15:1-8

Prayer over the Offerings

O GOD, who by the wonderful exchange effected in this sacrifice have made us partakers of the one supreme Godhead, grant, we pray, that as we have come to know your truth, we may make it ours by a worthy way of life...

Preface: *the priest may use any of the Easter Prefaces (see bottom of opposite page)*

Prayer after Communion

GRACIOUSLY be present to your people, we pray, O Lord, and lead those you have imbued with heavenly mysteries to pass from former ways to newness of life...

17th May 6th Sunday of Easter

No favourites

IT wasn't easy for the first Jewish converts to recognise that Jesus was 'the light to light the gentiles' as well as 'the glory of Israel'. But Peter, on whom the Church, under Christ, is founded, shows that 'God does not have favourites.' Irrespective of race and social standing, everyone who believes in the Lord receives the forgiveness of sins and can be admitted to the Church.

The Body of Christ is a community founded on love. In today's Second Reading, John emphasises that because God loves us, we must love him and love one another. In the Gospel, Jesus' own words are, 'This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you.'



Love is our highest calling and greatest challenge. The fruit of love is the greatest sign that the kingdom of heaven is being established on earth.

It is easy to love the people we like. But what about those who irritate us, and those we cannot find it in ourselves to like, let alone love? St Teresa of Avila wrote, 'Though we do not have our Lord with us in bodily presence, we have our neighbour, who, for the ends of love and for loving service, is as good as the Lord himself.'

And the writer G.K. Chesterton declared: 'We make our friends; we make our enemies; but God makes our next-door neighbour.'

Collect

GRANT, almighty God, that we may celebrate with heartfelt devotion these days of joy which we keep in honour of the risen Lord, and that what we relive in remembrance we may always hold to in what we do...

Readings: Acts 10:25-26,34-35,44-48. Response: The Lord has shown his salvation to the nations *or* Alleluia! 1 John 4:7-10.

Gospel acclamation: Alleluia... Jesus said, 'If anyone loves me he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we shall come to him.'

Gospel: John 15:9-17

Prayer over the Offerings

MAY our prayers rise up to you, O Lord, together with the sacrificial offerings, so that, purified by your graciousness, we may be conformed to the mysteries of your mighty love...

Preface: *the priest may use any one of the five Prefaces for Easter (see bottom of page 18)*

Prayer after Communion

ALMIGHTY ever-living God, who restore us to eternal life in the Resurrection of Christ, increase in us, pray, the fruits of this paschal Sacrament and pour into our hearts the strength of this saving food...



THE ASCENSION of THE LORD

FORTY days after the risen Christ first appeared to his apostles, he spoke of his divine authority, told them to 'make disciples of all nations' and was taken from their sight.

The Gospels inform us, 'He was parted from them' (Mark 16:19, Luke 24:51). Ascension Day celebrates this earthly parting and Jesus'

ascension to the right hand of his Father. The Ascension, like the feast of Christ the King, celebrates the Lord in glory.

Jesus told his followers: 'Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow me afterwards (John 13:36) and, 'If I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, so that where I am, you may be also.' (John 14:3)

Christ joins earth and heaven. He walks with us now, on earth – if we ask him to – in the Sacraments and in every aspect of our daily lives. And he is ever-living with the Father

to pray for us and to welcome us into his glory.

We have his wonderful assurance, 'Know that I am with you always, yes, to the end of time.' (Matthew 28:20)

NB The Church requires all Catholics to attend Mass on Ascension Day: it is a Holy Day of Obligation

Wednesday 13th May

Evening Vigil Mass of the Ascension

Collect

O GOD, whose Son today ascended to the heavens as the Apostles looked on, grant, we pray, that in accordance with his promise, we may be worthy for him to love with us on earth, and to be with him in heaven...

Readings as for Ascension Day Mass, below.

Prayer over the Offerings

O GOD, whose Only-Begotten Son, our High Priest, is seated ever-living at your right hand to intercede for us, grant that we may approach with confidence the throne of grace, and there obtain your mercy...

Preface

...for the Lord Jesus, the King of glory, conqueror of sin and death, ascended today to the highest heavens, as the angels gazed in wonder. Mediator between God and man, judge of the world and Lord of hosts, he ascended, not to distance himself from our lowly state, but that we, his members, might be confident of following where he, our head, has gone before...

The alternative Preface for the Ascension may be used: see Ascension Day Mass below.

Prayer after Communion

MAY the gifts we have received from your altar, Lord, kindle in our hearts a longing for the heavenly homeland and cause us to press forward, following in the Saviour's footsteps, to the place where for our sake he entered before us...

Thursday 14th May

Ascension Day

Collect

GLADDEN us with holy joys, almighty God, and make us rejoice with devout thanksgiving: for the exaltation of Christ your Son is our exultation, and where the Head has gone before in glory, the Body is called to follow in hope...

An alternative Collect may be used.

Readings: Acts 1:1-11. Psalm 46:2-3,6-9. Response: God goes up with shouts of joy; the Lord goes up with trumpet blast (*or* Alleluia!) Ephesians 3:1-13 *or* Ephesians 1:17-23.

Gospel acclamation: Alleluia... Go, make disciples of all nations; I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.

Gospel: Mark 16:15-20

Prayer over the Offerings

WE offer sacrifice now in supplication now, O Lord, to honour the wondrous Ascension of your Son: grant, we pray, that through this most holy exchange we, too, may rise up to the heavenly realms

Preface

...for, after his Resurrection, he plainly appeared to all his disciples and was taken up to heaven in their sight, that he might make us sharers in his divinity...

The alternative Preface may be used: see Vigil Mass above.

Prayer after Communion

ALMIGHTY ever-living God, who allow those on earth to celebrate divine mysteries, grant, we pray, that Christian hope may draw us onward to where our nature is united with you...

24th May
**Seventh Sunday
 of Easter**

AFTER Christ's ascension, his tiny band of disciples returned as he'd told them to Jerusalem, to await the coming of the Holy Spirit.

In the Second Reading, John explains that is the Spirit that enables God to live within us.

Under the guidance of the Spirit, the disciples elected Matthias to replace Judas Iscariot. They had learnt, from what Jesus taught them before his suffering and resurrection, that he would 'send them into the world' in the power of the Spirit. They had learnt, as Jesus says in the Gospel, that he wanted to share his joy with them. He wants to share it with us, too!

**Collect**

GRACIOUSLY hear our supplications, O Lord, that we, who believe that that the Saviour of the human race is with you in your glory, may experience, as he promised, until the ending of the world, his abiding presence among us...

Readings: Acts 1:15-17,20-26. Psalm 102:1-2,11-12, 19-20. Response: The Lord has set his sway in heaven or Alleluia! 1 John 4:11-16.

Gospel acclamation: Alleluia... I will not leave you orphans, says the Lord; I will come back to you, and your hearts will be full of joy.

Gospel: John 17:11-19

Prayer over the Offerings

ACCEPT, O Lord, the prayers of your faithful with the sacrificial offerings, that through these acts of devotedness we may pass over the glory of heaven...

Preface: *the priest may use any one of the five Prefaces for Easter (see page 18) or one of the Prefaces for the Ascension (see page opposite)*

Prayer after Communion

HEAR us, O God our Saviour, and grant us confidence, that through these sacred mysteries there will be accomplished in the body of the whole Church what has already come to pass in Christ her Head...

**PENTECOST**

THE EPIPHANY, Easter Sunday and Pentecost are the three earliest great feasts of the Church.

Pentecost means 'the fiftieth day'. It comes fifty days following the Jewish feast of Passover.

At Passover, the Jews celebrate their wondrous redemption from slavery in Egypt.

For us as Christians, Passover is the supreme feast which celebrates the redemption of all mankind from the slavery of sin. We call the feast 'Easter', the feast of Christ's resurrection.

Today, fifty days after Passover and fifty days after Easter Sunday, we celebrate Pentecost. For the Jews, Pentecost was the celebration of the grain harvest. It was also associated with the founding of the Jewish nation, when God delivered the Ten Commandments to Moses.

At the time of Pentecost, Jerusalem was crowded. On that day, as Jesus had promised, the Holy Spirit descended on the apostles. They were exhilarated, and at once rushed out to preach. The Church was born!

In his first sermon, Peter declared: 'This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you both see and hear... the promise is for you, for your children, and all who are far away... (Acts 2:32-33,39)

Pentecost is the climax and conclusion of Easter Time. One commentator has described it as one of the four most important events in human history:

The first was creation.

The second was the incarnation of the Son of God in the womb of Mary.

The third was the resurrection, Jesus on the cross having destroyed death and renewed life.

The fourth was the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

*Saturday 23rd May***Evening Mass of Pentecost****Collect**

ALMIGHTY ever-living God, who willed the Paschal Mystery to be encompassed as a sign in fifty days, grant that from out of the scattered nations the confusion of many tongues may be gathered by heavenly grace into one great confession of your name...

An alternative collect may be used.

First Reading: Genesis 11:1-9 or Exodus 19:3-8,16-20 or Ezekiel 17:1-14 or Joel 3:1-5. Psalm 103:1-2,24,27-30,35. Response: Send forth your spirit, O God, and renew the face of the earth or Alleluia!

Second Reading: Romans 8:22-27



Gospel acclamation: Alleluia... Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love.

Gospel: John 7: 37-39

Prayer over the Offerings

POUR out on these gifts the blessing of your Spirit, we pray, O Lord, so that through them your Church may be imbued with such love that the truth of your saving mystery may shine forth for the whole world...

Preface *as in tomorrow's Mass (opposite column)*

Prayer after Communion

MAY these gifts we have consumed benefit us, O Lord, that we may always be aflame with the same Spirit whom you wondrously poured out on your apostles...



23rd May
Pentecost Sunday
Final Day of Easter Time

Collect

O GOD, who in the mystery of today's great feast sanctify your whole Church in every people and nation, pour out, we pray, the gifts of the Holy Spirit across the face of the earth, and, with the divine grace that was at work when the Gospel was first proclaimed, fill now once more the hearts of believers...

Readings: Acts 2: 1-11. Psalm 103:1,24,29-31.34. Response: Send forth your spirit, O Lord, and renew the face of the earth *or* Alleluia! Corinthians 12:3-7,12-23 *or* Galatians 5:16-25

Sequence

Holy Spirit, Lord of light, from the clear celestial height thy pure beaming radiance give.

Come, thou Father of the poor, come with treasures that endure; come, thou light of all that live!

Thou, of all consolers best; thou, the soul's delightful guest, dost refreshing peace bestow.

Thou in toil art comfort sweet; pleasant coolness in the heat; solace in the midst of woe.

Light immortal, light divine, visit thou these hearts of thine, and our inmost being fill.

If thou take thy grace away, nothing pure in man may stay; all his good is turned to ill.

Heal our wounds, our strength renew; on our dryness, pour thy dew; wash the stains of guilt away.

Bend the stubborn heart and will; melt the frozen, warm the chill; guide the steps that go astray.

Thou, on us who evermore thee confess, and thee adore, thy sevenfold gifts descend.

Give us comfort when we die, give us life with thee on high; give us joys that never end.

Latin version

Veni, creator Spiritus. mentes tuorum visita, imple superna gratia, quae tu creasti pectora.

Qui diceris Paraclitus, altissimi donum Dei, fons vivus, ignis, caritas et spiritalis unctio.

Tu septiformis munere, digitus paternae dexteræ. tu rite promissum Patris. sermone ditans guttura.

Accende lumen sensibus, infunde amorem cordibus, infirma nostri corporis, virtute firmans perpeti.

Hostem repellas longius, pacemque dones protinus; ductore sic te praevio, vitemus omne noxium.

Per te sciamus da Patrem, noscamus atque Filium, te utriusque Spiritum, credamus omni tempore.

Deo Patri sit gloria, et Filio qui a mortuis Surrexit, ac Paraclito, in saeculorum saecula.

Gospel acclamation: Alleluia... Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love.

Gospel: John 20:19-23 *or* John 15:26-27; 16:12-15

Prayer over the Offerings

GRANT, we pray, O Lord, that, as promised by your Son, the Holy Spirit may reveal to us more abundantly the hidden mystery of this sacrifice and graciously lead us into all truth...

Preface:

...for, bringing your Paschal Mystery to completion, you bestowed the Holy Spirit today on those you made your adopted children by uniting them to your Only-Begotten Son. This same Spirit, as the Church came to birth, opened to all peoples the knowledge of God and brought together the many languages of the earth to the profession of the one faith. Therefore, overcome with paschal joy, every land, every people exults in your praise, and even the heavenly powers, with the angelic hosts, sing together the unending hymn of your glory, as they acclaim...

Prayer after Communion

O GOD, who bestow heavenly gifts upon your Church, grant, we pray, the grace you have given, that the gift of the Holy Spirit poured out upon her may retain all its force, and that this spiritual food may gain her abundance of eternal redemption..

The deacon or priest sings or says Go forth, the Mass is ended, alleluia, alleluia *or* Go in peace, alleluia, alleluia.

The people reply Thanks be to God, alleluia, alleluia.

Dismissal in Latin: *Ite, missa est. alleluia, alleluia* - *or* *Ite in pace, alleluia, alleluia.* Response: *Deo gratias, alleluia, alleluia.*

Easter Time is over

The paschal candle is extinguished. It may be kept near the font so that it is lit at baptisms and the candles of those baptised are lit from it.

Sunday 31st May: The Most Holy Trinity

Details in the June/July issue of the *Newsletter*

*Lord, may our participation at Mass
and our reception of Holy Communion
nourish our faith*

and our resolve to serve you

for the glory of your Name,

the good of your Church,

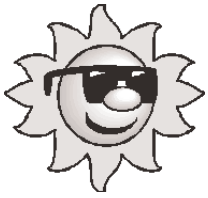
and the welfare of all we encounter.

Through Jesus Christ your Son,

who is alive and reigns with you

and the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and for ever.



Fee moi Gambia

Always something to celebrate

WE're already a quarter of the way through 2015. I'm told that this year's GPI calendar is very popular, with its bright pictures and details of the Catholic calendar worldwide and of commemorations particular to our own diocese.

There's another calendar, not to do with the Church. I call it the 'UN calendar', because its particular days – World Aids Day, Diabetes Day, Teachers' Day, Volunteers' Day, Refugees' Day, and so on - have been designated by the United Nations Organisation.

Most of these UN days relate to 'good causes'. They help combat ignorance and arouse understanding and sympathy. The way one or two are celebrated might raise a few Catholic eyebrows. But the great majority are well worth knowing about.

Then there are our own Gambian holidays: 18th February and 22nd July.

If routine gets you down, look at the Church calendar or the UN one. You'll have something to celebrate almost every day of the year!

Awareness – and ignorance

IN The Gambia, the Christian presence, although that of a minority, is well-respected by Muslims. Ask a Muslim what Lent means, and he's quite likely to be able to tell you.

Several Muslims have wished me a 'good Lent'. That's not a sentiment you would hear often in 'Christian' Europe, where lots of people have hardly heard of Lent, or have no interest in it.

Incidentally, here's an up-to-date comment on Our Lord Jesus Christ: 'He's like the Internet - he connects us all!'

Fifty years on

ON the fiftieth Independence Day I thought about the changes that have taken place in the Church in this country since 1965.

The Catholic Mission was then much smaller. In Banjul (known as Bathurst) the only church was the Cathedral. Michael Moloney had been Bishop since 1958, the Diocese of Banjul having been created in 1957. St Augustine's School at Campama was being built. A primary school at Lamin had been opened the year before, and other recently-opened Catholic primary schools included those at Basse, Sambang and Njongon.

Prior to the Independence celebrations, the Cathedral, Mission House and parochial hall were repainted inside and out.

Among the visitors were the Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Maury, Archbishop Hyacinth Thiandoum of Dakar and Bishop Prosper Dodds of Ziguinchor.

Archbishop Thiandoum presided at a High Mass of Thanksgiving at the Cathedral on 19th February. It would have been a Latin High Mass in what we now know as the

'Tridentine rite', because changes in the Order of Mass introduced by the Second Vatican Council were still to come.

How many churches did the diocese contain? There were St Therese at Kanifing (now the parochial hall), Star of the Sea Bakau, and churches at Kuntaur, Bwiam, Kartong, Basse and Bansang, and I don't know how many others.

The clergy at that time – all of them Spiritan missionaries from Ireland (though they called themselves Holy Ghost Fathers then) included Fr Michael Cleary (later to succeed Bishop Moloney), Fr McDonagh, Fr James White, Fr Corrigan, Fr Geoghan, Fr Thomas Tarmey, Fr Seán Little, Fr Vincent Comer, Fr Fleming, Fr Andrew Carroll and Fr Hugh Fagan. Fr John Sharpe and Fr Michael Casey were shortly to arrive.

Prominent lay people included René Blain, Dr Felix Blain, Chukly Sarr, Tisbe Faye, Marie-Bernadette Johnson, Clothilde Quinn and Mam Betty Joof.

In his history of the diocese, 'Reaping a Rich Harvest', Fr William Cleary wrote of the Catholic Mission at the time of Independence: 'The Church in The Gambia was still a backwater compared with the growing local churches in other parts of Africa. A missionary appointed to The Gambia then had... a small canvas on which to paint, and had to be content with that. This limitation gave rise to its own frustrations, which were perhaps exacerbated by the dawn of impending changes on the Church horizon with the Second Vatican Council. The early 60s were difficult years for the missionaries in The Gambia, and Bishop Moloney had on more than one occasion to encourage his mission personnel to greater forbearance and patience with their work and with themselves.'

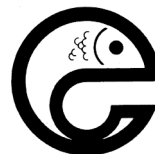
Thank God that clergy and lay people did persevere, and that the Church in The Gambia has since steadily grown. Let us pray for all the good Gambian Catholics of fifty years ago. Many are still with us, while others are resting from their labours in the Lord.

Red hearts, romantic thoughts

I'D like to think that most readers of this Newsletter did nothing special on Saturday 14th February. But probably quite a few did indulge their romantic instincts. The Gambia is increasingly part of the international scene, so Valentine's Day, formerly unknown or ignored, does help a bit to boost profits in shops and restaurants.

I don't know when St Valentine was dropped from the Catholic calendar. Various other days in the calendar have been commercialised: Easter Sunday (cards, eggs and fluffy rabbits); Mothering Sunday ('Mother's Day' – which this year was 15th March); Hallowe'en (the eve of All Saints); and above all, Christmas Day.

A friend has lately been wearing a tee-shirt emblazoned on one side with 'Sex is meant only for marriage', and on the other, 'Valentine's Day is a celebration through love of God'.



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with your Diocese!*

Visit
www.banjuldiocese.gm

'Today, God has chosen you to share in the priesthood of his Son Jesus Christ'

The homily of Bishop ROBERT ELLISON CSSp
at the Ordination of Fr James Mendy and Fr Tanislas Ndecky, 24th January 2015

THE RITE of Ordination begins with the calling of the candidates. The Bishop asks a designated priest in the presence of the whole community: 'Do you judge them to be worthy servants in the priesthood?' The priest replies: 'After inquiry among the people of God and on the recommendation of those concerned with their training, I testify that they have been found worthy.'

At that point, and then only, can the Bishop declare with the consent of the community present: 'We choose these men, our brothers, for the presbyteral order of the priesthood.'

The congregation replies, 'Thanks be to God.'

This year, these men are the Revd Tanislas Ndecky and the Revd James Mendy. They now bring the number of Gambian diocesan priests to twenty-two.

Brikama Parish continues to score another point this year, along with Fajikunda.

More than a formality

The short introductory ceremony may seem like a formality. But in fact, it is an ancient tradition that goes back centuries in the life of the Church.

The Bishop depends to a large extent on the testimony of the ordinands' formators in the Senior Seminary, but also on the approval of the parish communities from which each candidate comes. This takes place with the calling of the 'bans' on three consecutive Sundays in each parish of origin.

The Bishop is also obliged to consult the College of Consultors. Finally, the community present at the ordination ceremony gives its approval when they acclaim: 'Thanks be to God.'

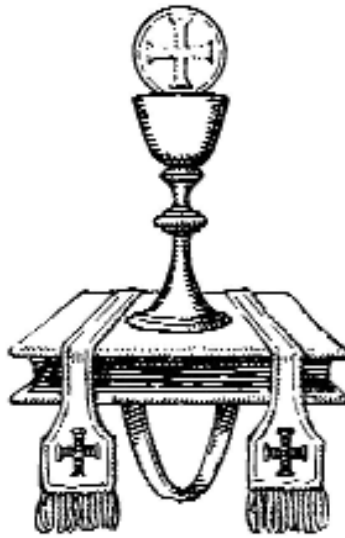
This latter tradition goes back to the days when there was no IT technology as we know it today. Hence, the Bishop had to depend on the approval of the community present at the ordination ceremony.

Ultimately, every human effort has to be made to testify to the worthiness of each candidate before the Bishop can proceed with the ordination. Ordination to the priesthood is therefore a serious undertaking.

However, candidates are not required to be eligible for canonisation! That may come later!

Thanks to the family

There is another important player in all this. If we were to overlook the part played by the families and parents of Tanislas and James during those early years of their life at home and at school – long before they ever reached any seminary – it would be a big mistake.



Tanislas and James: I am sure that your faith was nourished at home from a very early age by the example of your families and especially of your parents. We sincerely thank them today for all their support and attention.

This year, allow me to acknowledge the Ndecky family in a special way.

Today, they have presented to God three vocations for the Church in the Diocese of Banjul: Sr Josephine PM, leading the way. Last year it was Fr Victor. And now today, Tanislas completes the trio of vocations from one family – a record for our diocese.

Albino and Christine, on behalf of the Catholic community in The Gambia, I wish to convey our sincere gratitude for your exceptional generosity to the life of our

Catholic Church.

Of this I am certain: you have surely stored up a lot of spiritual 'credit' for that day when you will stand before God your creator at the door into heaven; and he will tell St Peter to escort you at once to the two special seats reserved for VIPs!

An extra two months

This year, the ordination ceremony of our two deacons takes place about two months later than usual.

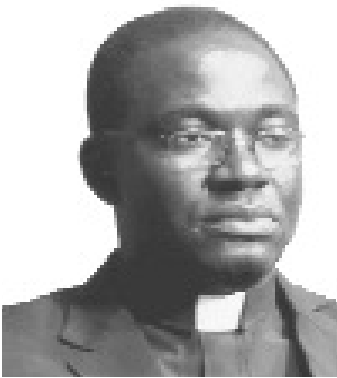
I want to assure all here present that this does not mean that they have done something wrong. I have just underlined the fact that before the Bishop can in good faith ordain a deacon to the priesthood, he depends primarily 'upon recommendation of those concerned with his training'. These are the people who know our seminarians. As you know, in our situation we have to send our senior seminarians to another country for their priestly formation.

All in all, it takes a total of eight years. At the end of each year a separate report is sent to the Bishop with reference to the human, academic, spiritual and pastoral growth of each candidate.

So far in my time as Bishop, the reports for our Gambians have, in general, been positive and encouraging. However, over the past year, the seminary in Freetown has gone through several obstacles and challenges due to a shortage of finance and staff. Needless to say, this affected the overall spirit of both the seminarians and those responsible for their formation: an unfortunate situation.

Our two deacons, as well as their colleagues, had to survive their final year of formation in an atmosphere that was not conducive to normal standards. It was this that prompted me to prolong their ministry as deacons for two extra months here in The Gambia.

In this way they have had an opportunity to further develop their pastoral training in particular in their own home diocese.



Father James Mendy



Father Tanislas Ndecky

Book knowledge is important, but practical experience of ministry is even more important, as it is for any other vocation or profession. The opportunity to preach the Word of God; how to baptise, how to anoint the sick, how to minister the sacrament of confession, how to prepare people for marriage...no ordained minister could ever say to himself: 'I know it all.' It is a lifelong task.

I want to thank the priests who have guided our two deacons in these various areas of ministry: Fr Edu Gomez with the Revd James, and Fr Sean Devereux with the Revd Tanislas.

And so, when the news got around last October that the Revd Tanislas and the Revd James would be ordained on 24th January 2015, it was not because they had done something wrong... it was solely to help them to prepare more fully as worthy shepherds destined to lead God's chosen people to pastures green.

'Don't think you know it all!'

God does not choose the qualified, but he does qualify his chosen ones.

My predecessor spoke these words of wisdom to me soon after my ordination as Bishop. In one way they were words of comfort; in another way, I think he was telling me, 'Don't think you know it all!'

Every priest is taken from among human beings and is appointed to act on their behalf in relationships with God. In other words, however frail we are as creatures ourselves, we are still chosen to mediate between God our Creator and our brothers and sisters in Christ. Paul puts it in his own way: '...as stewards entrusted with the mysteries of God, we carry this treasure in earthen vessels' (2 Corinthians 4:7)

Peter's ups and downs

The life of Simon Peter the fisherman is a fine example of the kind of disciple that Jesus reckoned he could depend on, in spite of Peter's failings and weaknesses - or perhaps because of them.

On the occasion of Jesus' last appearance to Simon and some other disciples, Jesus said to him: 'Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these others do?'

It happened by the shore of Lake Tiberias. Jesus had just worked a miracle of fish - so many that the disciples' boats were nearly sinking with the weight of the catch. Then he cooked breakfast for them on the shore of the lake.

After they had eaten, Jesus turned to Peter with the three-fold question: 'Do you love me?' Peter replied three times, 'Yes, Lord you know that I love you.' And Jesus said to him: 'Feed my lambs... feed my sheep.'

It must have been a very uncomfortable experience for the

big fisherman, with his close companions looking on and wondering, perhaps, if Jesus might have changed his mind about their future leader. It was clear that Jesus was reminding Peter of the way he had denied him three times during his trial. Nonetheless, it was the moment when Jesus finally confirmed Peter as the leader or primate of the twelve apostles.

Throughout the public life of Jesus, Peter was notorious for his ups and downs.

To Jesus' question 'Who do you say I am?' it was Peter who called out, 'You are the Christ.' Jesus then warned his disciples that he was destined to suffer and be put to death. Peter was so shocked when he heard this that he called Jesus aside privately and said to him: 'Master, this must never happen to you.'

Jesus replied: 'Get behind me, Satan'.

It took Peter some time to recover from this harsh reprimand. Diplomatic relations between the Master and the disciple must have sunk to an all-time low.

However, Jesus helped to break the ice by taking Peter, James and John up the mountain where he was transfigured in their presence. Here they saw the glorified Christ. Death was not to be the end of his mission.

In this way, they came to know each other as often as Peter continued to make mistakes and then repent.

'Lord, how often must I forgive my brother?...What's in it for us, Lord...?'

An awesome calling

Tanislas and James, God does not choose the qualified, but he does qualify his chosen ones.

Today, God has chosen you to share in the priesthood of his Son Jesus Christ. We as priests are ordained for the awesome calling to be mediators between God and man - we who are both saints and sinners in the same way as our brothers and sisters



in Christ. However, like St Peter, we also want to be able to say to Jesus 'Yes, Lord, you know that I love you', even if at times we fall and deny him.

Jesus would never condemn the sinner for falling; but he does expect us to get up and say as Peter did: 'Leave me alone, Lord, for I am a sinful man.'

If we are called to be mediators between God and man, we must give time to listen to both parties. Hence, we will need to spend time each day with the Lord. If I fail to do so, I cannot be true to either party or even myself. If I myself have no experience of being reconciled with a brother or sister, how can I begin to help a brother or sister to forgive and be reconciled with a neighbour?

'It is all God's work; he reconciled us to himself through Christ and he gave us the ministry of reconciliation. So, we are ambassadors for Christ.' (2 Corinthians 5)

One final point: I strongly recommend that you take one full day each week free from all your pastoral duties. This is not a luxury, but an opportunity to rest the body and soul from the daily routine of life. Above all, take some healthy exercise so that you can renew yourself for your ministry from week to week. *Mens sana in corpore sano*: even God our Creator rested from all his work of creation on the seventh day.

May the Spirit of the Lord be with you and bless your ministry all the days of your life. Amen.

from beyond the diocese

Francis bids us not to forget the poor



IN his Lent message, Pope Francis warned against indifference to the poor.

‘Usually, when we are healthy and comfortable, we forget about others (which God the Father never does): we are unconcerned with their problems, their sufferings and the injustices they endure... our heart grows cold,’ he said.

‘As long as I am relatively healthy and comfortable, I don’t think about those less well-off. Today, this selfish attitude of indifference has taken on global proportions, to the extent that we can speak of a globalisation of indifference. It is a problem which we, as Christians, need to confront.’

He continued: ‘Indifference to our neighbour and to God also represents a real temptation for us Christians. Each year during Lent we need to hear once more the voice of the prophets who cry out and trouble our conscience.’

Pope Francis used his message to ‘invite everyone to live this Lent as an opportunity for engaging in what Benedict XVI called a “formation of the heart”.’

‘A merciful heart does not mean a weak heart. Anyone who wishes to be merciful must have a strong and steadfast heart, closed to the tempter, but open to God. A heart which lets itself be pierced by the Spirit so as to bring love along the roads that lead to our brothers and sisters. And, ultimately, a poor heart, one which realises its own poverty and gives itself freely for others.’

Archdiocese of Cologne reveals €3.35 billion fortune

THE CATHOLIC Archdiocese of Cologne has published financial accounts showing for the first time the full extent of its wealth.

The archdiocese has long been considered Germany’s richest, but exact figures weren’t known because the Church did not publish its accounts. Documents posted on its website on Ash Wednesday showed that at the end of 2013 it had assets of €3.35 billion (about D167.5 billion).

Around €2.4 billion was invested in stocks, funds and company holdings. A further €646 million was held in tangible assets, mostly property. Cash reserves and outstanding loans amounted to about €287 million.

In 2013 the archdiocese received €573 million from church taxes paid by the two million Catholics living in the region around Cologne. After adding other income and subtracting expenses such as salaries, it generated a surplus of €59 million.

The archdiocese’s finance chief described the publication as ‘a big step toward financial transparency’, following criticism of Germany’s Catholic Church in the wake of a scandal over the former Bishop of Limburg’s lavish spending. Pope Francis has stressed the need for the church to show humility and emphasise its work for the poor.

Death of Italian Catholic chocolate billionaire

MICHELE Ferrero, the billionaire Italian entrepreneur whose company Ferrero makes Nutella chocolate-spread and Ferrero Rocher chocolates, died at his home in Monaco on 14th February after months of illness. He was a devout Catholic, said to have named Ferrero Rocher chocolates after the sacred grotto in Lourdes, where he made an annual pilgrimage. Each of Ferrero’s 14 production plants around the world, including those in Turkey and China, features a statue of the Virgin Mary. Mr Ferrero was reportedly Italy’s richest man. The Ferrero company has annual sales of more than €8 billion (about D400 billion).



Nigerian bishops denounce use of children as suicide bombers

NIGERIA’S bishops have condemned Boko Haram’s use of children to commit suicide bombings.

‘We deplore the fact that young children are used to commit such crimes... a disturbing symptom of breakdown of family values in our society,’ the bishops said at the end of a five-day meeting on the theme, ‘Good families make good nations’.

The bishops asked, ‘We wonder: who are the parents of these young Nigerians? Do these young ones not belong to families?’ They stressed that many families are facing challenges caused by the Boko Haram insurgency and the heightened tension occasioned by general elections scheduled for 28th March and 11th April.

The insurgency has resulted in people being forced to flee their homes, innocent people killed and families separated. ‘Our hearts go out to children separated from their parents, especially our beloved daughters the Chibok girls and others who have been abducted by mindless terrorists.’

The bishops paid tribute to Nigerian soldiers and other security operatives who have died in fighting the insurgency.

They condemned electioneering which involves ‘threats of violence, falsehood, rumour-mongering, mudslinging and suspicion’, and urged all Nigerians to see themselves as members of the same family: the family of Nigeria.

Nigerian order saves English shrine

A CHURCH and shrine in the English Catholic Diocese of Lancaster are to be run by a recently-established Nigerian religious order.

The Bishop of Lancaster, the Rt Revd Michael Campbell, announced that St Mary’s, Fernyhalgh and the Ladyewell Shrine would be run by two young priests from the Institute of the Holy Family, founded in Nigeria in 2002.



Devotion to Our Lady of Fernyhalgh dates back to the 11th century, and the shrine houses relics of St Thomas Becket. It faced an uncertain future after the retirement of the parish priest and shrine director, Fr Tom Hole.

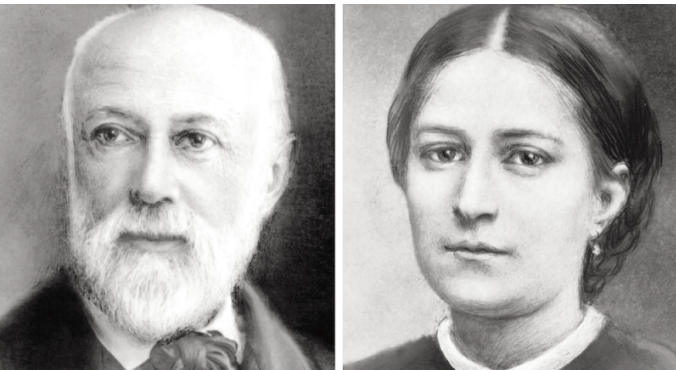
Bishop Campbell said: 'Thankfully, my decision to ask the Institute of the Holy Family to assist us here in the diocese means that St Mary's Fernyhalgh and Ladyewell Shrine are secured and safeguarded for the future.'

The church and shrine will remain open daily for prayer and to receive pilgrims. The shrine is four miles from Preston and is frequented by Catholic, Anglican and Orthodox pilgrims.

A diocesan spokesman said the bishop had found a 'new, vibrant and skilled religious community to ensure the future sustainability and patrimony of St Mary's Fernyhalgh and Ladyewell Shrine.'

* In January this year, another church in the Diocese of Lancaster, St Ignatius in Preston, was taken over by the Indian Syro-Malabar Catholic community after being closed for two months due to a shortage of priests.

Francis to canonise St Therese's parents



POPE Francis is expected to canonise Blessed Louis and Zélie Martin, parents of St Therese of Lisieux, during the World Synod of Bishops on the Family to be held in October.

Louis and Marie Zélie Guerin Martin were married in 1858. They had nine children, but four died in infancy. All five children who survived – including St Therese – entered the religious life. Zélie Martin died of cancer in 1877 at the age of 45; her husband died in 1894, when he was 70.

The couple were beatified in 2008. They are believed to be the first parents of a saint to be beatified, highlighting the role that parents play in their children's human and spiritual upbringing.

Following Vatican procedures, before their canonisation the Pope will have to recognise a miracle that occurred after prayers for the couple's intercession before God.

The decree is expected to be signed before Easter.

The next step will be for the Pope to hold a consistory to announce the decision to proceed with canonisation. A Vatican official has said that the consistory will probably be held in June.

The Lisieux website says that a miracle studied for the couple's canonisation involves a girl in the Diocese of Valencia, Spain, who was born prematurely and suffered a brain haemorrhage. Her parents prayed for the intercession of Blessed Louis and Zélie Martin. The girl survived, and is healthy.

Pope Francis has a special devotion to St Thérèse. When he was Archbishop of Buenos Aires he kept a photo of her in his library. He has said that when he has a problem he asks St Therese 'not to solve it, but to take it in her hands and help me accept it'.

'Joy for Catholics in Egypt'

THE FIRST Catholic church in Sinai was consecrated on Sunday 15th February - 'a great day of joy for Catholics in Egypt' declared Bishop Makarios, Coptic Catholic Bishop of Ismailia.

Sharm El-Sheikh is a tourist resort famed for its coral reefs. 'In Sinai we have a number of places of worship,' said Bishop Makarios, 'but they are chapels or just rooms in houses. The Church of Our Lady of Peace is the first proper church.'

Application for building the church was submitted in 2003, and the foundation stone was laid in 2005. Afterwards, things moved forward only haltingly: in Egypt, the construction of a church is a political issue. Bishop Makarios said: 'At one point, after everything had ground to a halt, we went to the wife of the then President Mubarak. Susanne Mubarak went to school with nuns. She helped us.'

Fr Bolos Garas has been priest in Sharm since 2010. 'When I came, there was no church. This is why it is so moving to finally see the church completed. An elderly Italian recently came to me and said that he could now die in peace, because he had heard the bells ring in the tower.'

Fr Bolos celebrates three Sunday Masses. 'I am a Coptic Catholic priest. But there are only a few Coptic Catholics here. Most of our faithful are tourists or foreign workers. So I not only celebrate Mass according to my rites, but also according to the Roman rites, in Italian and in English.'

The English-language Mass is attended by workers from the Philippines. 'Though we are far from our country, we feel at home in the Catholic Church. We are very happy that our beautiful church has now been finished,' said Mary, a Filipina hotel worker.

The Italian Mass is mainly attended by retired Italians who spend the winter in Sharm because of its mild climate. 'Sharm has always been beautiful. But for us, this place has a real heart now,' said Giovanni, from northern Italy.

The Italian community has formed a church choir which sang during the consecration, conducted according to Coptic rites by Patriarch Ibrahim I. Sidrak, head of the 200,000-strong Egyptian Coptic Catholic Church.

The Governor of South Sinai, who attended the consecration, stressed how important it was that the Christians have a place of worship: 'It is a place to offer prayers for peace.'



Question Box

Is it always a sin to tell a lie?

WHEN God asked Cain, the first murderer, 'Where is your brother Abel?' Cain replied, 'I do not know.' From then on, throughout Scripture, the telling of lies is condemned.

The Psalmist declares: 'No one who practices deceit shall remain in my house; no one who utters lies shall continue in my presence.' (Psalm 100:7). And later, 'Deliver me, O Lord, from lying lips, from a deceitful tongue.' (Psalm 119:2)

St Paul advises, 'Putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbours.' (Ephesians 4:25).

St Peter has similar counsel: 'Rid yourselves, therefore, of all malice and all guile, insincerity, envy, and all slander.' (1 Peter 2:1).

Our Lord himself declared, 'The truth will make you free.' (John 8: 32), and told some of his detractors, 'You are from your father the devil...there is no truth in him.' (John 8: 44)

Why do we tell lies? There are many reasons, including

- * protecting ourselves against the consequences of our wrongdoings ('It wasn't me!')
- * leading others astray
- * gaining advantage for ourselves at others' expense
- * boasting
- * flattering
- * feeling that the truth may offend or disappoint ('Come back next week, I may be able to help you then.')

We tell 'social' or 'white' lies so as not to upset others. If our sister asks us if we like her new dress, we may answer 'yes' when in fact we don't like it at all! We may murmur appreciative but insincere comments about our host's food, or the musical ability of the church organist.

And 'Pleased to meet you' may not mean what it says!

Perhaps such lies are not always out of place; but we need to be careful, because the difference between the 'little' lie and the lie which harms us and others is often small.

'The Catechism of the Catholic Church' has much to say about 'Offences against truth' (2475 - 2487): 'Neither the desire to be of service nor friendship justifies duplicitous speech...a lie consists of speaking a falsehood with the intention of misleading...By its very nature, lying is to be condemned...it is a profanation of speech...Lying is destructive of society; it undermines trust among men and tears apart the fabric of social relationships.'

On rare occasions, a straight lie may be praiseworthy. An example occurs in Joshua chapter 3, when Rahab tells the King of Jericho that the Israelites she's hiding in her house are not there. In the same way, during the Second World War, those who provided secret shelter to Jews lied to the authorities at great risk to themselves. Much earlier, in Elizabethan England, when Catholic priests were 'wanted men' who if detected would be put to death, all sorts of subterfuge was used by those hiding them.

But the rule almost all the time is, 'Don't tell a lie!'

Would you like to say **Morning and Evening Prayer** every day, in company with priests and lay-people throughout the world?



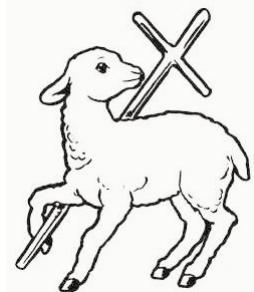
Go to **Universalis** website and click on Morning Prayer, or Mass, or Vespers – as you wish – and you will find the complete Office



Do you know?

- 1 Who, in the Old Testament, dreamt of a ladder going up to heaven?
- 2 Name the West African who on 15th February was installed as a cardinal by Pope Francis
- 3 When, in the Gospel, did Jesus eat breakfast with his disciples?
- 4 Which church in The Gambia is named in honour of a French saint?
- 5 What motto appears on Bishop Ellison's coat of arms?
- 6 What does the illustration on the right symbolise?

Answers on page 33



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5. Bansa ng	6969915	24. Latrikunda Sabiji	6868847
6. Basse Santa Su	6868839	25. London Corner	6868807
7. Basse Highway	6969865	26. Old Jeshwang	6868831
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10. Brusubi Mini Market	6868819	29. Sayer Jobe Avenue	6868808
11. Brusubi Galp Station	6969873	30. Serrekunda Bartess	6868836
12. Bundung	6868821	31. Serrekunda Mosque Road	6868814
13. Busumballa	6868827	32. Soma	6868837
14. Churchill's Town	6868817	33. Sukuta	6868895
15. Cooperative	6868822	34. Talbokoto	6868813
16. Dippa kunda	6868812	35. Tallindling	6868809
17. Fajara	6868825	36. Westfield Opp. World Mobile	6868910
18. Farafenni	6868838	37. Westfield Next to Church	6868864
19. Kanifing Estate	6868842		



Some weekday celebrations in April & May

Thursday 23rd April: St George *martyr*

THERE are a good many legends about St George, said to have been a 3rd-century soldier. He is patron of Greece and Portugal as well as the Italian cities of Genoa and Venice. In 1222 George replaced St Edward the Confessor as patron of England. As football fans know, the flag of England shows the red cross of St George on a white background. St George is patron of the Scout movement. Schools in Basse are named after him, and the bell at Holy Spirit Banjul, formerly at the Cathedral, is named 'St George'.

Saturday 25th April: St Mark *evangelist*

THE GOSPEL attributed to St Mark is the shortest of the four Gospels, and probably the first to have been written.

John Mark was a cousin of St Barnabas. It was at Mark's mother's house in Jerusalem that the disciples assembled (Acts 12:12). Mark travelled with Barnabas and Paul to Cyprus (Acts 12:25; 13-13; 15:26-39). He left them there, but later helped Paul when he was in prison in Rome. Tradition says that Mark was St Peter's interpreter, and that Mark's Gospel is based on Peter's reminiscences. In our present liturgical year (2014-15) most of the Gospel readings at Sunday Mass are taken from Mark.

Wednesday 29th April: St Catherine of Siena *doctor of the Church*

CATHERINE was born in Siena, Tuscany (now part of Italy). In 1363 she joined the Dominican Order, becoming known for her holiness and asceticism. She played a major part in the return of the Popes from Avignon, in France, to Rome. Her writings include four treatises on religious mysticism. She wrote: 'Be what God meant you to be, and you will set the world on fire!' She died on 29th April 1389 and was canonised in 1461.

Saturday 2nd May: St Athanasius *doctor of the Church*

THE EARLY Christian theologian Athanasius was born in 293 at Alexandria, Egypt. In 325 he took part in the first Council of the Church in Nicæa (now Iznik, in Turkey). The council condemned the heresy known as Arianism, which denied Christ's divinity. In 328 Athanasius was appointed Patriarch of Alexandria, but in 336 theological disputes led to the first of several banishments. Athanasius repeatedly returned from exile and resumed his office, but in 356 he was banished by the Emperor Constantine. He went to live in a remote desert in Upper Egypt and wrote theological works. Constantine's death in 361 gave Athanasius a brief respite, but controversy with the new Emperor's heathen subjects forced him to flee into the Theban desert. At the time of his death in 373 he was again in possession of his diocese.

The Creed of St Athanasius was named after him, but not written by him. The creed defines the Persons of the Trinity as revealed by the Holy Spirit. It is accepted by the Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican and most Protestant churches.



Wednesday 13th May: Our Lady of Fatima

FROM May to October 1917 in Fatima, central Portugal, three peasant children reported having seen visions of a woman who identified herself as 'The Lady of the Rosary'. On 15th October a crowd of around 70,000 witnessed an amazing solar phenomenon just after the children had seen the vision. The first national pilgrimage took place in 1927, and the following year the construction of a basilica was begun. Over the years, a good many Gambians have visited Fatima on pilgrimage.

Tuesday 26th May: St Philip Neri

PHILIP Neri was born in 1515. He became known as the Second Apostle of Rome at a time when the reform movement called the Counter-Reformation was changing the face of the city. Philip was ordained priest at the age of 35. He gathered young people together for spiritual exercises and found himself leading a group of priests who wished to live together not bound by vows but united in charity in an institution known as the Oratory. Philip was the friend of popes and cardinals and noted for his preaching and his modesty and humour. He died in 1595 and was canonised in 1622. Oratories on the pattern of Philip's original one have been opened in several cities.



Wednesday 27th May: St Augustine of Canterbury

AUGUSTINE was the first Archbishop of Canterbury, in England. He was born in 6th-century Rome, and became a Benedictine friar. Augustine was chosen by Pope Gregory I to lead 40 monks and missionaries to England. They arrived in 597. Augustine converted King Ethelbert of Kent and many of his subjects. On the Pope's instructions he purified many pagan temples and consecrated 13 other bishops. He died in 604.

St Augustine's Senior Secondary School, like the earlier Catholic boys' school in Hagan Street Banjul, is named after him.



Gambian Christian anniversaries

April and May

55 YEARS AGO: on 24th April 1960 Bishop Moloney blessed Star of the Sea Church, Bakau. The visible Catholic presence in Bakau had begun 45 years earlier, in 1915, when the first clergy house was erected, built of mud blocks.

For many years Mass was said for small groups in private houses.

The building of Star of the Sea Church, supervised by Fr James White, began in October 1959. The church and its marble altar were paid for by the S. Madi family (as commemorated by a plaque at the church). By January 1960 the tower had been completed, and a bell from



the Cathedral, 'St Therese', was installed. Renovations to the clergy house were completed by August 1961.

In December 2008 and April 2012 substantial renovations were undertaken, amounting to a transformation, thanks to Mrs Shadia Shallop, a member of the congregation.

20 YEARS AGO: on April 1995 Bishop Cleary blessed the Church of the Holy Rosary, Lamin, the building of which was, like Star of the Sea, supervised by Fr James White.

23rd April 1816: Captain Alexander Grant, having purchased Banjul Island from the King of the Kombos, renamed it 'St Mary's Island'.

18th April 1848: The first High Mass was celebrated in a converted room in Banjul which served as a chapel.

18th April 1849: Bishop Aloysius Kobès visited Banjul from Dakar and purchased a property in Hagan Street (now Daniel Goddard Street), where the Cathedral now stands. He paid 2,500 French francs.

2nd May 1849: Bishop Kobès blessed the foundation of the first Catholic chapel in Banjul, on the site of the present Cathedral.

14th April 1850 (165 years ago): Four French Sisters of the Immaculate Conception arrived to open a girls' school.

11th April 1878: Fr Renoux arrived to take over from Fr Reihl. He died less than five months later, on 5th October.

1st April 1883: The Immaculate Conception Sisters left Banjul, to be succeeded the following week by five Sisters of St Joseph of Cluny - one French, the others Irish.

15th April 1916: Death in battle at Passey, northern France, of Fr Gabriel Sanneh, Senegambian chaplain to Senegalese forces. He had been ordained in St Louis in 1902, and attached to the Hagan Street church in Banjul from 1904 to 1907.

1st May 1931: Bishop Augustin Grimault visited Banjul to confirm 30 young people.

4th May 1935 (80 years ago): Arrival of Sr Albert Byrne SJC (*right*), who was to serve in The Gambia almost continuously until her death in Banjul on 16th July 2001, aged 90.

15th April 1936: Fr Harold Whiteside celebrated the first Mass in Old Jeshwang in a hut used for confirmation classes.

9th April 1948: Bishop Dodds of Casamance blessed the first St Therese's Church at Kanifing (now the parochial hall).

13th April 1951: In St George's Anglican Cathedral, Freetown, the Archbishop of Canterbury consecrated Rodney Norman Coote as Second Bishop of Gambia and Rio Pongas.

15th April 1951: Fr Michael Moloney (later Bishop Moloney) was appointed first Prefect-Apostolic of Banjul.

8th April 1958: Completion of the first mission house

in Bwiam, supervised by Fr Reginald Gillooly.

4th May 1958: Episcopal Ordination in Dublin of Fr Michael Moloney as first Bishop of Banjul.

27th April 1960 (55 years ago): Fr Michael Frawley returned to Nigeria, having spent seven years as Principal of St Augustine's High School. His successor was Fr Michael Cleary (later Bishop Cleary).

2nd April 1962: Bishop Moloney blessed a bell at the Cathedral.



9th April 1966: Following changes inaugurated by the Second Vatican Council, Bishop Michael Moloney (*left*) set up three commissions: liturgy, headed by Fr Hugh Fagan; ecumenism, Fr Michael Flynn; and the laity, Fr Seán Little.

9th April 1972: Archbishop Carroll of Monrovia consecrated the new St Therese's Church Kanifing.

4th April 1980 (35 years ago): Bishop Moloney announced the acceptance by the Holy See of his resignation, due to ill health.

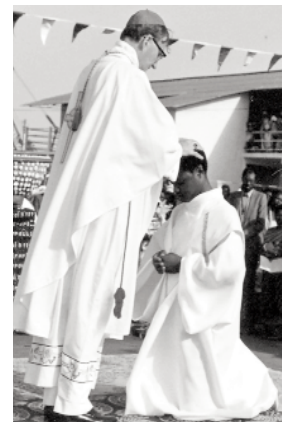
5th April 1983: The Cluny Sisters celebrated a century in The Gambia (*see 1st April 1883, opposite*) at the opening of the convent at Darsilami, with Sisters Elizabeth, Joseph and Philomena in residence.

13th April 1985: At the Independence Stadium, Bishop Cleary ordained Anthony Gabisi and Peter Gomez as priests, and David Jimoh Jarju and Edward Gomez as deacons (*see pages 6-7*)

12th April 1986: Ordination by Bishop Michael Cleary at St Augustine's High School Banjul of Fr Edward Gomez (*right*),

26th April 1986: Ordination at Kartong by Bishop Cleary of Fr David Jimoh Jarju.

21st April 1989: At Bwiam, the renovated church was rededicated to Our Lady of Fatima.



25th April 1992: Opening of All Saints Brikama.

17th April 1993: Opening of St James Kandunkou.

5th April 1997: Opening of St Matthew Barra.

10th April 1999: Priestly ordination by Bishop Cleary of Fr Joseph Kabo and Fr Michael Ndecky.

21st April 2001: Opening of St Peter and St Paul Albreda.



18th May 2004: Death aged 85 in Aix-en-Provence, France, of Cardinal Hyacinth Thiandoum (left), Archbishop of Dakar 1962-2000.

6th April 2006: Death of Margareta Edenius, who for many years raised funds in Sweden for Catholic education in The Gambia. Her work continues.

23rd May 2006, St Matthias' Day: Episcopal Ordination at the Independence Stadium Bakau of the Rt Revd Michael Patrick Ellison CSSp as third Bishop of Banjul.

1st April 2007, Palm Sunday: Bishop Ellison blessed the Chapel of Perpetual Adoration at St Therese's Kanifing.

28th April 2007: Bishop Emeritus Michael Cleary opened the Anne-Marie Javouhey Academy Brusibi.

29th April 2007: Opening of the Church of Blessed Teresa of Calcutta at Mariamakunda.

11th-23rd April 2008: in Nairobi, Bishop Ellison attended the Pastoral Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue.

25th May 2008: Death in Dakar of Monsignor Pierre Sagna CSSp, Bishop Emeritus of St Louis du Sénégal, who had spent his retirement in The Gambia, where he lived at Holy Cross Church Brusibi.

May 2008: In Freetown, Bishop Ellison took part in the

Bishops' Conference of The Gambia and Sierra Leone.

20th April 2009: Launching of the Network of Catholic Women's Associations.

11th May 2009: Brother Marcelin, Principal of the Lycée Sacré Coeur Ziguinchor, visited St Peter's Senior Secondary School Lamin with 11 teachers and 84 pupils. His lycée is linked to the school in Lamin.

24th May 2009: 187 years after the arrival of the first Methodist missionaries in this country, the Methodist Mission in The Gambia achieved autonomy from the parent mission in Britain.

2nd May 2009: President Yahya Jammeh invested Bishop Ellison with the insignia of Honorary Commander of the Order of the Republic of The Gambia (CRG).

April 2010 (5 years ago): *Ad limina* visit to Rome of Bishop Ellison and his brother bishops from Sierra Leone.

9th May 2015: As part of the Cathedral Centenary celebrations, the third Diocesan Dinner was held at the Kairaba Beach Hotel.



10th May 2015: Sr Marie J. Mendy, the only Gambian sister of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, made her perpetual profession.

End of May 2014: After serving in The Gambia since 1967, Fr Michael Casey CSSp (pictured left) returned finally to Ireland.



Pious practices

MANY devotional practices in the Church are so habitual that we don't think about them.

But whenever we make the sign of the Cross, for instance, or dip our fingers into holy water, we should do so in awareness of what the action means.

We shouldn't perform such actions to impress others, or to tell ourselves how devout we are. We perform them to honour God and our membership of his Church.

IN church, we genuflect (bow the knee) to acknowledge the sacramental presence of Christ in the tabernacle or on the altar.

At certain other times at the time of worship we bow our head - for instance, at the mention of the Persons of the Holy Trinity.

During the Mass, we bow during the creed (profession of faith) at the words *et homo factus est* ('and became man') and we bow to receive the blessing at the end of Mass.

Some bow when saying the *Confiteor* - 'I confess'.

The priest and servers bow profoundly on arriving at the altar, and on leaving.



Answers to 'Do you know?' page 28

1. Jacob (son of Isaac, brother of Esau and father of Joseph) '...he dreamt that there was a ladder set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven; and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.' Genesis 28: 13-17.
2. The Bishop of Santiago de Cabo Verde, Arlindo Gomes Furtado.
3. John 21: 1-14. Jesus and his disciples took breakfast on a beach. It was the third time after his resurrection that Jesus revealed himself to them.
4. St Therese Kanifing
5. Thy kingdom come (*Adveniat regnum tuum; NaSa Ngur Dika*) from the Lord's Prayer.
6. Jesus as the Lamb of God (*Agnus Dei*). The Jewish people were familiar with the lamb as a symbol of sacrifice: see, for example, Exodus 12:3-5. John the Baptist recognised Jesus as 'the Lamb of God' (John 1:29).

Daily Mass Readings

Sunday readings Year B Weekday readings Year 1



April & May 2015

Memorials in brackets are optional

Sunday 29th March (Palm Sunday) to Sunday 5th April (Easter Sunday)
Full details on pages 13-17

Mon 6th April	Acts 2: 14, 22-33. Psalm 16: 1-2, 5, 7-11. Matthew 28: 6-15	MONDAY in the Octave of Easter
Tue 7th	Acts 2: 36-41. Psalm 33: 4-5, 18-20, 22. John 20: 11-18	TUESDAY in the Octave of Easter
Wed 8th	Acts 3: 1-10. Psalm 105: 1-4, 6-9. Luke 24: 13-35	WEDNESDAY in the Octave of Easter
Thu 9th	Acts 3: 11-26. Psalm 8: 2, 5-9. Luke 24: 35-48.	THURSDAY in the Octave of Easter
Fri 10th	Acts 4: 1-12. Psalm 118: 1-2, 4, 22-27. John 21: 1-14	FRIDAY in the Octave of Easter
Sat 11th	Acts 4: 13-21. Psalm 118: 1, 12-21. Mark 16: 9-15	SATURDAY in the Octave of Easter
Sun 12th	Acts 4: 32-35. Psalm 118: 2-4, 13-15, 1 John 5: 1-6. John 20: 18-31	2nd SUNDAY of EASTER (Divine Mercy)
Mon 13th	Acts 4: 21-31. Psalm 2: 1-9. John 3: 1-8.	(St Martin I)
Tue 14th	Acts 4: 32-37. Psalm 93: 1-2, 5. John 3: 7-15	
Wed 15th	Acts 5: 17-26. Psalm 34: 2-9. John 3: 16-21	<i>abstinence</i>
Thu 16th	Acts 5: 27-33. Psalm 34: 2, 9, 17-20. John 3: 31-36	
Fri 17th	Acts 5: 34-42. Psalm 27: 1-4, 13-14. John 6: 1-15	
Sat 18th	Acts 6: 1-7. Psalm 33: 1-2, 4-5, 18-19. John 6: 16-21	
Sun 19th	Acts 13-15, 17-19. Psalm 4: 2, 4, 7-9. 1 John 2: 1-5. Luke 24: 35-28	3rd SUNDAY of EASTER
Mon 20th	Acts 6: 8-15. Psalm 119: 23-24, 26-27, 29-30. John 6: 22-29	(St Anselm)
Tue 21st	Acts 7: 51 – 8: 1. Psalm 31: 3-4, 6-8, 17, 21. John 6: 30-35	(St George or St Adalbert)
Wed 22nd	Acts 8: 1-8. Psalm 66: 1-1-7. John 6: 35-40.	(St Fidelis of Sigmaringen) <i>abstinence</i>
Thu 23rd	Acts 26-40. Psalm 66: 8-9, 16-17, 20. John 6: 44-51	St MARK
Fri 24th	Acts 9: 1-20. Psalm 117: 1-2. John 6: 52-59	
Sat 25th	1 Peter 5: 5-14. Psalm 89: 2-3, 6-7, 16-17. Mark 16: 15-20	
Sun 26th	Acts 4: 8-12. Psalm 118: 1, 8-9, 21-23, 26, 28-29. 1 John 3: 1-2. John 10: 11-18	4th SUNDAY of EASTER
Mon 27th	Acts 11: 1-18. Psalm 42: 2-3, 43: 3-4. John 10: 1-10	(St Peter Chanel or St Louis Grignion de Montfort)
Tue 28th	Acts 11: 19-26. Psalm 87: 1-7. John 10: 22-30	St Catherine of Sienna
Wed 29th	Acts 12: 24 - 13: 5. Psalm 67: 2-3, 5-6, 8. John 12: 44-50	(St Pius V)
Thu 20th	Acts 13: 13-25. Psalm 89: 2-3, 21-22, 25, 27. John 13: 16-20	(St Joseph the Worker) <i>abstinence</i>
Fri 1st May	Acts 13: 26-33. Psalm 2: 6-11. John 14: 1-6 .	13: 54-58
Sat 2nd	<i>or for St Joseph:</i> Genesis 1: 26 – 2:3 or Colossians 3: 14-15, 17, 23-24. Matthew 13: 54-58. Psalm 98: 1-4. John 14: 7-14	St Athanasius
Sun 3rd	Acts 9: 26-31. Psalm 22: 26-28, 30-32. 1 John 3: 16-24. John 15: 1-8.	5th SUNDAY of EASTER
Mon 4th	Acts 14: 5-18. Psalm 115: 1-4, 15-16. John 14: 21-26	
Tue 5th	Acts 14: 19-28. Psalm 145: 10-13, 21. John 14: 27 – 31	<i>abstinence</i>
Wed 6th	Acts 15: 1-6. Psalm 122: 1-5. John 15: 1-8	
Thu 7th	Acts 15: 7-21. Psalm 96: 1-3, 10. John 15: 9-11	
Fri 8th	Acts 15: 22-31. Psalm 57: 8-10, 12. John 15: 12-17	
Sat 9th	Acts 16: 1-10. Psalm 100: 1-3, 5. John 15: 18-21	
Sun 10th	Acts 10: 25-26, 34-35, 44-48. Psalm 98: 1-4. 1 John 4: 7-10. John 15: 9-17	6th SUNDAY of EASTER
Mon 11th	Acts 16: 11-15. Psalm 149: 1-6, 9. John 15: 26 - 16: 4	(St Nereus & St Achilleus or St Pancras)
Tue 12th	Acts 16: 22-34. Psalm 138: 1-3, 7-8. John 16: 5-11	(Our Lady of Fatima)
Wed 13th	Acts 17: 15, 22 – 18: 1. Psalm 148: 1-2, 11-14. John 16: 12-15	The ASCENSION of THE LORD
Thu 14th	Acts 1: 1-11. Psalm 47: 2-3, 6-9. Ephesians 4: 1-13 or 1: 17-23. Mark 16: 15-20.	(St Isidore) <i>abstinence</i>
Fri 15th	Acts 18: 9-18. Psalm 47: 2-7. John 16: 20-23	
Sat 16th	Acts 18: 23-28. Psalm 47: 2-3, 8-10. John 16: 23-28	
Sun 17th	Acts 1: 15-17, 20-26. Psalm 103: 1-2, 11-12, 19-20. 1 John 4: 11-16. John 17: 11-19	7th SUNDAY of EASTER
Mon 18th	Acts 19: 1-8. Psalm 68: 2-7. John 16: 29-33	(St John I)
Tue 19th	Acts 20: 17-37. Psalm 68: 10-11, 20-21. John 17: 1-11	(St Bernadine of Sienna)
Wed 20th	Acts 20: 28-38. Psalm 68: 29-30, 33-36. John 17: 11-19	(St Christopher Magallanes)
Thu 21st	Acts 22: 30; 23: 6-11. Psalm 16: 1-2, 5, 7-7-11. John 17: 20-26	(St Rita of Cascia) <i>abstinence</i>
Fri 22nd	Acts 25: 13-21. Psalm 103: 1-2, 11-12, 19-20. John 21: 15-19	
Sat 23rd	Acts 28: 16-20, 30-31. Psalm 11: 4-5, 7. John 21: 20	
	Evening Vigil Mass of Pentecost: details on page 22	
Sun 24th	Details on pages 21 & 22	PENTECOST SUNDAY
	Ordinary Time ('the Green Season') resumes	(Venerable Bede or St Gregory VII)
Mon 25th	Sirach 17: 20-24. Psalm 32: 1-2, 5-7. Mark 10: 17-27	St Philip Neri
Tue 26th	Sirach 35: 1-12. Psalm 50: 5-8, 14, 23. Mark 10: 28-31	(St Augustine of Canterbury)
Wed 27th	Sirach 36: 1, 4-5, 10-17. Psalm 79: 8-9, 11, 13. Mark 10: 37-45	
Thu 28th	Sirach 42: 15-25. Psalm 33: 2-9. Mark 10: 46-52	<i>abstinence</i>
Fri 29th	Sirach 44: 1, 9-13. Psalm 149: 1-6, 9. Mark 11: 11-26	(of the BVM)
Sat 30th	Sirach 51: 12-20. Psalm 19: 8-11. Mark 11: 27-33	
Sun 31st	Deuteronomy 4: 32-34, 39-40. Psalm 33: 4-6, 9, 18-20, 22. Romans 8: 14-17. Matthew 28: 15-20	The MOST HOLY TRINITY

End
Piece

'We have forgotten how to cry'

The Mediterranean is becoming a vast graveyard

THE EUROPEAN Union's search-and-rescue operation in the Mediterranean is 'woefully inadequate', the United Nations said recently after more than 300 migrants died off the coast of Libya.

According to UN figures, more people than ever before in human history are on the move. In 2013 it was estimated that three per cent of the world's population - or 232 million people - were leaving the countries in which they were born.

North America is a huge magnet for people from Latin America and Asia. There is a steady flow of people from South Asia to the oil-based economies of the Gulf States and from sub-Saharan countries of Africa to Europe - particularly where there is conflict, such as in the Central African Republic, northern Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and, more recently, Syria, Iraq, Libya and Palestine.

Illegal migration by sea

It is the attempted illegal migration of people across the Mediterranean from Africa and the Middle East to the EU that so frequently hits the headlines.

On 3rd October 2013, for example, 360 men, women and children drowned close to Lampedusa, an island off the coast of Sicily. Most of them were fleeing from Somalia and Eritrea, and had died trying to enter Europe by making the hazardous crossing of the Mediterranean.

The previous July, Pope Francis, on his first pastoral visit outside Rome, had visited Lampedusa and called for a 'reawakening of consciences' to counter the indifference shown to migrants. 'We have lost a sense of brotherly responsibility,' he said and 'have forgotten how to cry' for migrants lost at sea.

He also denounced the traffickers who exploit migrants.

2014 deadliest year on record

In the year up to last October, 150,000 migrants attempting to reach Europe from North Africa in mostly old and dilapidated boats, had been picked up by the Italian navy. The International Organisation for Migrants has reported that 2014 was the deadliest on record for migrants.

At the start of this year, two cargo vessels carrying over 1,000 migrants in their filthy holds and abandoned by their crews were towed into Italian ports.

The strain on Italian resources has proved too great. It was announced last October that their rescue operations were to be replaced with a more limited operation called Triton, run by the EU border agency Frontex.

Triton covers only a specific area and possesses few vessels and aircraft for search and rescue operations, yet the



Mediterranean is over 2.5 million square kilometres.

Last November, when Pope Francis addressed the European Parliament, he declared: 'We cannot allow the Mediterranean to become a vast graveyard.'

It is estimated that there are more than 600,000 people in North Africa waiting to cross to Europe.

Libya, with over 20 migrant detention centres, is the busiest transit route for Africans heading illegally to Europe.

Migrants are at the mercy of traffickers, terrorists and corrupt officials. Europe's response to these people, most of whom are seeking to better themselves and their families or fleeing poverty and conflict, is to build what has come to be known as Fortress Europe.

After much European pressure, Morocco has installed between itself and the Spanish enclave of Melilla a five-yard high fence topped with razor to stop migrants crossing into Europe. Last December, 200 migrants attempted to storm the fence, just one of 65 such stormings last year.

Greece has erected a twelve-and-a-half-foot fence rolled with barbed wire on its border with Turkey, with foot patrols, watch-towers and 23 thermal vision cameras, funded by the EU. Bulgaria is doing the same at its border with Turkey.

'Eurosur' - border surveillance

In 2006 Eurosur, the European Border Surveillance System, was established to regulate the EU's 7,400 km of land and 57,800 km of coastline borders. It aims to create 'a situational awareness' of trouble spots in the areas mentioned, plus Calais, the French port where the situation of those seeking to enter the United Kingdom illegally is dire.

On World Day of Migrants and Refugees in 2013, Pope Francis issued a powerful statement acknowledging the many different issues that give rise to migration, but adamant that migrants and refugees 'are not pawns on the chessboard of humanity'.

He added that 'not infrequently, the arrival of migrants, displaced persons, asylum seekers and refugees gives rise to suspicion and hostility. There is a fear that society will become less secure, that identity and culture will be lost, that competition for jobs will become stiffer, and even that criminal activity will increase.' He utterly condemned the various forms of human trafficking and enslavement, and concluded by calling for a change of attitude of the part of everyone.

In place of defensiveness, fear, indifference and marginalisation, the Pope advocated 'attitudes based on a culture of encounter, the only culture of building a better, more just and fraternal world'. Surely this is a challenge for us all.

Abridged from an article by Fr David Forrester in The Catholic Herald, London



Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also waiting expectedly for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate wondered if he were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he had been dead for some time. When he learnt from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the body to Joseph.

Then Joseph brought a linen cloth, and taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth and laid it in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. *Mark 15:42-47.* From the *Passion Gospel for Palm Sunday, 29th March*

Details of this painting: page 2