



The Diocese of Banjul NEWSLETTER

Incorporating The Catholic Newsletter

Alleluia
Assumpta est Maria



Urgent:
Save our Planet !

Pope Francis
challenges us all





?

Question Box

A friend asked me the other day, 'Why do you Catholics worship the Virgin Mary?'
What should I have answered?

MAKE it absolutely clear to your non-Catholic friends that Catholics do NOT worship Mary. Worship is due to God alone.

But, along with other Christians, Catholics do reverence Mary. In Scripture, Mary herself declares: '...all generations shall call me blessed' (Luke 1:48).

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

At the Council of Ephesus in 431 Mary was given the title 'Mother of God' (in Latin, *Mater Dei*; in Greek, *Theotokos* - 'God Bearer').

'Mother of God' makes some Protestants uneasy. The title does, of course, honour Mary: but its essential importance is that it makes clear the divinity of Christ, who is true God and true man. Mary is mother of the man who is God. Some have suggested that the title could be rendered, 'Mother of God Incarnate'.

Distinct Catholic doctrines about Mary include three assertions:

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

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

The most frequent invocation of Mary is contained in the *Angelus*: 'Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death.'

This is the briefest summary of Catholic belief and practice about Mary. If you have *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, study sections 963-972, and you will be well-primed to answer questions about Mary from other Christians (including some Catholics!) as well as from Muslims.

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



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By way of introduction

August, September and what comes after...



THE YEAR 2015 is more than half over. Mention the eighth month - the month of August - and most Catholics will think of *Sang Marie*. Not only Catholics, of course. As Bishop Emeritus Cleary pointed out in a *Sang Marie* message we reprint on page 5, both Christians and Muslims revere and honour Mary, mother of Jesus.

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

September will come sooner than we expect, and with it the re-opening of schools. Head teachers often talk of the need for a working partnership between the school and parents. Such a partnership involves parents in everyday support of their children at home and in what their children are learning at school. At home as well as in school, children should learn the value of cleanliness, attention to detail, consideration for others - and much else, including tolerance and a spirit of give-and-take.

Such advice may seem old-fashioned. But why not? The school curriculum is evolving and expanding to meet our nation's and our children's needs, but religious and family values and the values that promote learning don't change. Parents - and grandparents - can show children that though their own schooldays are long over they, too, are still keen to learn, so as to enjoy life to the full.

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

some may think that with *Sang Marie* behind us, the next big Christian feast will be Christmas. But every single Sunday is a public holiday - and for Christians it's the most important day of the week. As for feast days, what about All Saints', which happens this year to fall on a Sunday? What about the following day, All Souls? What about Christ the King, on Sunday 22nd November?

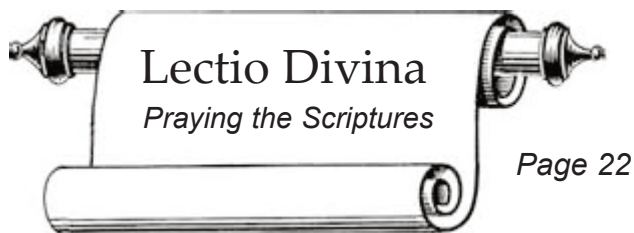
What about the Immaculate Conception, on Tuesday 8th December, and the Saturday before it, 5th December, when we'll flock for the national pilgrimage to Kunkujang Mariama? There are plenty of Christian 'big days' before Christmas!

But you and I can treat every day as a 'big day' - a big opportunity to live life to the full. An opportunity for kindness and helpfulness in the family and beyond. An opportunity to listen and to learn. An opportunity to share comfort and cheer.

'Redeem thy mis-spent time that's past, and live this day as 'twere thy last,' wrote the 17th-century Anglican bishop, Thomas Ken.

Amen. No more lost opportunities. We don't know what tomorrow may bring; but that's not our problem - not until tomorrow comes. Let's make *today* our big day!

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



Tips for the HOT
and HUMID weather

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Blessed be the great Mother of God, Mary most holy! Blessed be her glorious Assumption!

IT'S the *Immacolata* in Spain and Latin America, *Sang Marie* in The Gambia and Senegal, and throughout the world the Assumption - the Catholic feast on 15th August which celebrates the assumption into heaven, body and soul, of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

In The Gambia, the Catholic Cathedral and Diocese are dedicated to Our Lady of the Assumption.

Mary's greatest feast day has long been revered by Catholics, and the *Sang Marie* procession in Banjul attracts huge crowds, including many other Christians, and Muslims.

The procession begins at Holy Spirit Banjul after Vespers, and makes its joyous way to the Cathedral for Benediction.

Sang Marie has been a public holiday since 1958.

For around 18 years Gambians living in England have assembled near London for a similar *Sang Marie* procession, and a parallel event is held each year in Atlanta, in the United States.

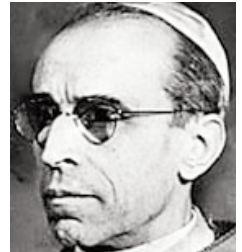
Taken into glory

Mary's assumption is not mentioned in the New Testament, but as a joint Catholic and Anglican statement declared in 2005, 'We affirm together the teaching that God has taken the Blessed Virgin Mary in the fullness of her person into his glory as consonant with Scripture, and only to be understood in the light of Scripture.'

Belief in the assumption was held throughout the Catholic Church for centuries.

On 1st November 1950 Pope Pius XII (*right*) declared as a dogma revealed by God:

Mary, the immaculate, perpetually Virgin Mother of God, after the completion of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into the glory of heaven.



Mary's privileges

Catholic teaching is that God granted Mary three privileges:

- * Her immaculate conception: Mary possessed the Divine Life from the first moment of her existence
- * Her sinlessness, granted her as the mother of the Sinless One, Jesus Christ
- * Her assumption: Mary is the 'first fruits' of the harvest of salvation.

Baptism restores us to the life of the Spirit, but Christians - like all mankind - must submit to death and the corruption of the body. Those who die possessing the life of the Spirit are assured that their mortal bodies, like Mary's, will share God's life and joy at the Final Resurrection.

Saturday 15th August 2015
Solemnity of the Assumption,
is a HOLY DAY of OBLIGATION
when no Catholic should wilfully fail
to take part in the Mass
See also Question Box, page 2



The Pope's Prayer Intentions

August

- That volunteers may give themselves generously to the service of the needy.
- That setting aside our very selves, we may learn to be neighbours to those who find themselves on the margins of human life and society.

September

- That opportunities for education and employment may increase for all young people.
- That catechists may give witness by living in a way consistent with the faith they proclaim.



Do
you
know?

- 1 Who, in the Old Testament, while Moses was away, commanded the people of Israel to make a golden calf, and offer sacrifices to it?
- 2 What and where is 'Kerr Moussa'?
- 3 Who, in the New Testament, declares: 'I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. I am on trial concerning the hope of resurrection of the dead'?
- 4 What prayer is known as 'the Roman Canon'?
- 5 Identify the Irish missionary priest shown on the right.



Answers on page 18

Talking and living together - as Mary would wish us to do

The message for *Sang Marie* eleven years ago
of Bishop Emeritus MICHAEL CLEARY CSSp



WE are celebrating the Feast of the Assumption - the patronal feast of the cathedral and diocese, the feast of the taking-up of Mary into heaven at the end of her earthly existence.

It is not just a Christian holiday; it is a public holiday, allowing non-Catholic Christians and Muslims - many related by marriage and other ties to Catholics - to celebrate together.

Mary occupies a special place in God's relations with his creatures. She is, as it were, a 'go-between' - someone who mediates on our behalf.

It is worth noting that devotion to Mary is in some way a point of contact between Islam and Christianity.

'Mariama' is given special recognition in the Holy Book [the Qur'an], where she is mentioned 34 times, and called 'the greatest of all women'. In the Bible, she is mentioned only 19 times.

The Qur'an records at length the Annunciation of the archangel Gabriel to Mary, and says that she was 'always protected from the attacks of Satan'.

Mary, then, is honoured, even at times devoutly invoked.

For this and other reasons it is not unusual for Muslims to share [in the festivities of *Sang Marie*] with their Christian neighbours.

Let us promote dialogue

Let us, on our part, promote a spirit of inter-faith dialogue and harmony with our Muslim brothers and sisters, as Mary would wish us to do.

Inter-religious dialogue is most effective when it springs from the experience of living with each other from day to day within the same community and culture. Christians and Muslims have lived side by side for centuries, and a rich dialogue of life has gone on unceasingly.

Every individual and every family knows moments of harmony - and other moments when dialogue has broken down. The positive experiences must strengthen our communities in the hope of peace; and the negative experiences should not be allowed to undermine that hope.

For all the times that Muslims and Christians have offended one another, we need to seek forgiveness from the Almighty

and to offer each other forgiveness. Jesus teaches us that we must pardon others' offences if God is to pardon our sins (Matthew 6:14).

This dialogue between the Catholic Church and Islam has gained momentum in recent decades, and today we can be grateful for the road we have travelled together so far. For more than 30 years [now, over 40 years] the Vatican has sent a message to Muslims on the occasion of *Eid-el-Fitr (Koriteh)* at the close of Ramadan, and I am very happy that this gesture has been welcomed as a sign of growing friendship between us.

It is important that Muslims and Christians continue to explore philosophical and theological questions together in order to come to a better knowledge of each others' religious beliefs.

For the good of the human race

Better mutual understanding will surely lead at the practical level to a new way of presenting our two religions: not in opposition, as has happened too often in the past, but in partnership for the good of the human race.

As members of the one human family and as believers, we have obligations to the common good, to justice and solidarity. Inter-religious dialogue will lead to many forms of co-operation, especially in responding to the duty to care for the poor and the weak. These are the signs that our worship of God is genuine.

The company of Mary

As we make our way through life to our heavenly destiny, Christians feel the company of Mary, the mother of Jesus; and Islam, too, pays tribute to Mary and hails her as 'chosen above the women of the world' (Qur'an: Sura 3:42).

The Virgin of Nazareth has taught us that God protects the humble and 'scatters the proud in the conceit of their hearts' (Luke 1:51).

Heavenly peace

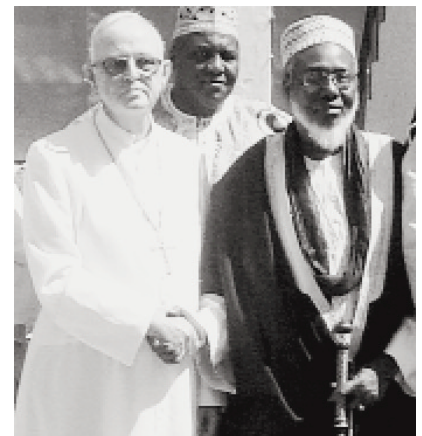
May the hearts of Christians and Muslims turn to one another with feelings of brotherhood and friendship, so that the Almighty may bless us with the peace that heaven alone can give.

To the One, Merciful God be praise and glory for ever. Amen.

I wish you all a happy *Sang Marie*.



Serving the One God: *Bishop and Imam embrace*



Continuing the tradition:
Bishop Ellison with Imam Kah

Here & there

NEWS FROM AROUND THE DIOCESE

Father Sean says farewell



FATHER Seán Devereux, until recently Parish Priest at Our Lady of Fatima Bwiam, left the diocese on Tuesday 9th June. This month - August - he takes up a permanent media post for the Diocese of Ferns in his native Ireland.

Fr Seán was ordained in 1987. With the agreement of his bishop he came to serve in The Gambia in October 1999, helping to update and extend

the radio and television studio (the Communications Unit) at GPI.

When Fr Peter Lopez, (now Director of GPI) returned following a three-year media course in Italy, Fr Seán became Parish Priest at St Kizito's Bakoteh, where he led parishioners in extending the church building and attracted new members to the congregation as well as initiating various community and educational projects.

He returned to Ireland in July 2011 to take charge again of the communications unit in the Diocese of Ferns and to join the team ministry of a busy parish in Wexford.

Fr Seán came back to The Gambia in 2012 as Parish Priest of Our Lady of Fatima, Bwiam.

Visitors from Kolda feel 'at home'

PRIESTS, sisters and lay people from all seven parishes in the Diocese of Kolda spent a happy week in June at GPI for recreation and to experience aspects of life in The Gambia - which some of them had not visited before.

The visitors expressed their pleasure in the visit, adding that they had been so welcomed that they didn't feel themselves to be strangers, but at home.

On 4th July three priests were ordained in the Cathedral of *Notre Dame des Victoires*, Kolda, by Mgr Jean-Pierre Bassène, who has been Bishop since the Diocese of Kolda was founded in December 1999.

The population of the Diocese of Kolda is around 884,000, of whom about 37,000 (4.4 per cent) are Catholics.



The Diocese of Kolda

Correction

In our issue of June/July 2015 the visit of St John Paul II to Holy Spirit Church was given as February 2002. The correct date is February 1992.

St Therese on top



ST THERESE Lower Basic School triumphed in the finals of the annual Grade Five Bible Quiz on 12th June at GPI, earning 43 points and beating St Charles Lwanga, 32 points, and St Francis, 31 points. The quiz master was Therese Valentine.

Prizes were presented by Fr Antoine Sambou (*above*) and Fr Peter Lopez.

In preliminary competitions on 29th May, for Centre 1, St Charles Lwanga earned 72 points against St Therese with 67 points. In Centre 2, St Peter gained 75 points and Anne-Marie Rivier 93 points. In Centre 3, St Francis gained 69 points and St Andrew 63 points.

Poponguine: a 127-year-old tradition

ON Monday 25th May many Gambians travelled to Poponguine, Senegal.

Like earlier generations of Gambians since 1888, they were joining with thousands of Senegalese in the annual pilgrimage to the shrine of *Notre Dame de Délivrante* (Our Lady of Deliverance).

Poponguine is a seaside town about 70 kilometres south of Dakar, on the *Petite Côte* of Senegal. Evangelisation was begun there by two French priests in 1885. Difficulties led to a temporary withdrawal, but in 1887 twenty-nine catechumens were baptised, and it was decided that Poponguine would be a fine setting for a shrine to Our Lady inspired by the centuries-old sanctuary of *Notre Dame de Délivrante* in Normandy, north-west France.

At the first pilgrimage in May 1888, thirty-eight children and young people were baptised.

In 1992 Poponguine was visited by St John Paul II.

No apparitions or miracles are associated with Poponguine, but for 127 years pilgrims have been spiritually refreshed by their visits to the shrine, made holy by their prayers.

* The Gambian shrine of Our Lady Queen of Peace at Kunkujang Mariama was inaugurated in 1987, almost a century later than Poponguine. The annual Gambian national pilgrimage takes place on the Saturday nearest to 8th December, the feast of the Immaculate Conception. In recent years a second pilgrimage has been held on the first Saturday of Lent.



From Parish Priest in Bansang to Bishop in Ghana

BISHOP John Kwofie CSSp, who as a young missionary priest served at Basse and Bansang from 1988 to 1991 and is now Bishop of Sekondi-Takoradi, Ghana, visited The Gambia from 8th to 17th June.

During his visit, Bishop Kwofie stayed in the priests' house at Bakau, which is the headquarters of the Spiritans (Holy Ghost Fathers) in The Gambia.

The Bishop's busy programme included a visit to St Peter's Lamin, meeting Spiritan associates, and a Mass with priests, sisters and laity at Gambia Pastoral Institute. He spent a day with the Presentation Sisters, and visited Fr Pius Gidi CSSp at Holy Cross Brusibi.

On Sunday 14th June Bishop Kwofie conducted a Confirmation Mass at St Therese's. Other events included an evening Mass at Holy Family and a visit to the eco-tourism reserve at Makasutu, on the Mandina Bolong tributary.

John Bonadventure Kwofie was born on 26th April 1958 at Apowa, Ghana. He studied at the seminary in Isienu Nsukka, Nigeria from 1981-1983, then spent a pastoral year in Holy Holy Rosary Parish, Suema, in Archdiocese of Kumasi, Ghana.



Bishop Kwofie's Cathedral, Star of the Sea

He was ordained priest in Kumasi on 23rd July 1988.

In 1988-1989 Fr Kwofie served at St Joseph's Basse from 1988 to 1989, before becoming Parish Priest from 1989 to 1991 at Sacred Heart Bansang.

From 1991 to 1995 he studied in Rome, where he gained a licentiate at the Pontifical Biblical Institute. His subsequent pastoral work included service in parishes in the Archdiocese of Kumasi and the Archdiocese of Accra.

Bishop Kwofie has had experience as an academician and leader in the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, including Vice-President of the Conference of Major Superiors for Africa, Provincial Superior of his Congregation in West Africa, Co-ordinator of the Continental Conference of Major Superiors for Africa, and First Assistant of the Superior-General of the Congregation.

He was appointed Bishop by Pope Francis on 3rd July 2013. He is the fourth Bishop of Sekondi-Takoradi.



Protecting children

AT the invitation of Bishop Robert Ellison, priests, religious sisters and lay people gathered at GPI on Friday 26th June to mark the end of the Pastoral Year.

After registration, the day began with *Lectio Divina* led by the Vicar-General, Fr Emile Sambou. This being the Year of Consecrated Life, Bishop Ellison spoke on 'The Prophetic Role of Religious'.

Yadi Eribo Njie (*pictured above*) led a discussion on the Child Protection Policy of Diocese of Banjul, and proceedings concluded with lunch.

Lectio Divina (Latin for 'Divine Reading') is a traditional Benedictine practice of scriptural reading, meditation and prayer intended to promote communion with God. It does not treat Scripture as texts to be studied, but as the Living Word.

Lectio Divina, page 22

Happy Day at St Peter's

ON Sunday 28th July (the day before the Solemnity of St Peter and St Paul), the Parish of Lamin held its annual Feast, well-attended and much-enjoyed by parishioners and by many visitors from other parishes.

The original St Peter's Church was funded by the barrister and political leader P.S. Njie, and replaced many years later by the present St Peter's, built in Bishop Cleary's time with the help of a German-American woman donor who had never visited The Gambia.

The daughter-church of the parish, Holy Rosary, was opened by Bishop Cleary in 1995.



What is the connection between The Gambia and this photograph of Pope Benedict XVI? See page 23

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**A letter to bishops from the presidents of Caritas Internationalis
and the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants & Itinerant People**

Fighting a terrible crime

THE HOLY Father has said, 'Human trafficking is an open wound on the body of contemporary society, a scourge on the body of Christ. It is a crime against humanity.'

... Human trafficking is expanding globally and concerns almost every community. Each year, thousands of people are deceived and sold into slavery as forced labourers, prostitutes or beggars; in other words, become victims of human trafficking.

According to global estimates, there are at least 2.4 million trafficked persons at any given point in time. But there are only a few thousand convictions of traffickers every year. Most of the victims are not identified, and consequently never receive justice for the damage inflicted upon them.

The trans-national dimension of the global crime of human trafficking requires the combined efforts in the countries of origin, the countries of transit and the countries of destination of trafficked human beings.

A successful response to this crime is not possible without the strong involvement of churches. The Church can raise awareness about trafficking, help identify and give assistance to victims, and involve Church leaders in developing more efficient instruments to combat traffickers and protect the human rights of victims.

Bishops' conferences, Caritas organisations and other Church groups can play a crucial role in combating human trafficking at all levels. For instance, a statement from a bishops' conference regarding human trafficking could

influence national policy and the Catholic community. Moreover, bishops' conferences can guide groups – in particular, religious congregations and priests – towards such action as education, prayer, assistance and policy/advocacy efforts aimed at improving national systems of prevention and assistance to victims.

We invite bishops' conferences and their social pastoral institutions, including Caritas organisations, to fight this terrible crime through pastoral initiatives involving local Christian communities, Catholic schools, youth associations and more.

...We also urge you to connect with the ecumenical Network of Christian Organisations Against Human Trafficking (COATNET) co-ordinated by Caritas Internationalis. The network builds capacity, offers forums for exchange of practices, advocates at global level on behalf of members, and facilitates co-operation between members (www.coatnet.org).

...Let us respond to the call of Pope Francis, who continuously highlights the urgent need to combat this crime.

(signed)

Oscar Cardinal Roderuez

President of Caritas Internationalis

Antonio Maria Cardinal Veglio

President of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People



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

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BEST WISHES

*to our Muslim
Brothers & Sisters
for TOBASKI
- Eid-el-Adha -*

Obituary

Devoted member of GPI staff

THE DEATH occurred in Mali on Sunday 14th June of Alhassane Diarra, who worked from 2004 to 2012 for the Gambia Pastoral Institute.

Mr Diarra was born in Mali and educated in Côte d'Ivoire. He worked in a variety of jobs before joining GPI, where he was first a watchman, then worked in the Communications Unit, and then, notably, as a driver. To every task Mr Diarra brought dedication, competence and initiative. Although he remained a Muslim, he was well-informed about Catholicism and the Diocese of Banjul, and popular with all his colleagues.

In May 2012, Alhassane Diarra (or simply 'Diarra', as he liked to be called) left GPI to work for the NGO, Future In Our Hands. In recent months he was diagnosed as gravely ill, and returned to Mali.

Mr Diarra leaves a widow and young children. Prayers for him and his bereaved family were said at Morning Prayer at GPI.





May the fruits of good deeds enrich your life

**Message to Muslims for *Koriteh* by Cardinal JEAN-LOUIS TAURAN
President of the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue**

I AM pleased to send you, in the name of all Catholics around the world, and in my name as well, best wishes for a peaceful and joyful *Eid-el-Fitr*.

You exercise during the month of Ramadan many religious and social practices like fasting, prayer, almsgiving, help to the poor, visits to family members and to friends. I hope and pray that the fruits of these good deeds may enrich your life.

For some of you and also for others from other religious communities, the joy of the feast is shadowed by the memories of those who have lost their life or goods, or suffered physically, mentally and even spiritually because of violence. Ethnic and religious communities have been through various and enormous unjust sufferings: the killing of some of their members, destruction of their religious and cultural heritages, forced emigration from their homes and cities, molestation and rape of their women, enslavement of some of their members, trafficking of persons, commerce of organs, and even selling of corpses!

We are all aware of the gravity of these crimes in themselves. However, what makes them even more heinous is the tentative of justifying them in the name of religion. It is a clear example of instrumentalising religion for gaining power and riches.

Needless to say that those who have the responsibility for security and public order have also the duty to protect their people and their properties from the blind violence of the terrorists. Besides, there is also the responsibility of those who have the task of education: families, schools, curricula, religious leaders, religious discourse, media. Violence and terrorism are first conceived in the mind of the deviated persons, thereafter perpetuated on the ground.

All those involved in the education of the youth and in the various educational spaces should teach the sacred character

of life and the derived dignity of every person, regardless of his or her ethnicity, religion, culture, social position and political choice. There is no life that is more precious than another one because it belongs to a specific race or religion. Therefore, no one can kill. No one can kill in the name of God; this would be a double crime: against God and the very person.

There cannot be any ambiguity in education. The future of a person, community and the whole of humanity cannot be built on such ambiguity or apparent truth. Christians and Muslims, according to their respective religious tradition, look at God and relate to Him as being the Truth. Our life and behaviour as believers should reflect such conviction.

‘The privilege of prayer’

According to St John Paul II, Christians and Muslims have ‘the privilege of prayer’ (address to Muslim religious leaders, Kaduna, Nigeria, 14th February 1982). Our prayer is much needed: for justice, for peace and security in the world; for those who have deviated from the true path of life and commit violence in the name of religion, so as to return to God and change life; for the poor and the sick.

Our feasts, among others, nourish in us hope for the present and the future. It is with hope that we look at the future of humanity, especially when we do our best to make our legitimate dreams become a reality.

With Pope Francis, we wish you that the fruits of Ramadan and the joy of *Eid-el-Fitr* may bring about peace and prosperity, enhancing your human and spiritual growth.

Happy Feast to you all!

*From the Vatican, 12th June 2015
(signed) Jean-Louis Cardinal Tauran*

Plant a tree!

SINCE time immemorial, trees have been the most prominent living feature of any natural setting apart from polar regions and deserts.

Trees are the backbone of life as we know it. They conserve water. They control pollution. They protect the very earth itself. They are nature’s oxygen banks, air cleaners, rain-bringers and erosion-preventers. And they are beautiful.

Trees bring us shade, shelter and privacy. Their wood builds houses, bridges and boats. Their fruits help feed, furnish and comfort us. Their dead tissue has been transformed over the ages into the fossil fuels of coal, gas and oil that provide energy for industry and make it possible for us to travel by land, sea and air.

Trees supply us indirectly with so much that sustains human life; yet for generations we have cut them down without replacement, without a thought for the future. Already, entire regions have been denuded of their natural forests. By continuing to despoil the natural environment, we are causing changes to the world climate which could ultimately lead to the end of the habitat on which human life depends.

The resultant atmospheric pollution of carbon dioxide (which trees would have converted into life-giving oxygen) is causing scientists, planners and politicians great concern.

The Church is also increasingly concerned, because she regards the human race as stewards of God’s creation. This has recently been forcibly re-iterated by Pope Francis in his encyclical, *Laudato Si’*.





**CHILDREN'S
PAGE**

**Here is a
picture for
you to colour**





Walk, walk, walk

WALKING is an ideal form of exercise.

Many people have to walk to work, or they get plenty of exercise while they're at work. But many of us walk and exercise less than our parents and grandparents did - one reason why so many people today are overweight.

Walking every day can help ensure that our hearts, minds, bones and muscles are working properly, as well as making us feel better.

Becoming even a bit more active can reduce the amount of fat in our body and lessen the risk of life-threatening diseases such as cancer, type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

By walking more, you will benefit immediately through enhanced energy levels, feeling less tired and having less chance of feeling 'low'.

Remember that our body has been designed to walk. We humans have been walking for more than a million years!

Why is walking good for us?

There are many reasons to walk (rather than travelling by bus or car):

- nearly half of most people's journeys may be walkable
 - a walk boosts your immune system for 24 hours, helping you to fend off fresh colds and other infections
 - walking is a convenient form of exercise that can fit into your daily routine, and doesn't feel like a 'duty'
 - walking can help save money on travel or petrol costs
 - walking provides high-releasing natural endorphins into the blood
 - walking provides opportunities to reflect, gather your thoughts and pray
 - walking can help disperse stress and anxiety
- the amount of calories you burn will depend on the individual, speed and type of terrain - but on average 160 calories per kilometre or 20 minutes walking.
- walking can help save the planet!

Walking for just 11 days a week could save 11 stones of carbon dioxide over the course of a year.

How much?

The current medical recommendation for physical activity, including walking, is just 30 minutes of moderate activity

a day for adults, and 60 minutes a day for children.

You don't have to do this in one go to start with, but can break it down into smaller chunks.

If you're not sure that walking is the right exercise for you, talk to your doctor.

Walking in the rain?

If you want to preserve the appearance of leather shoes, especially after rain, sponge or wipe off mud and dirt carefully before applying polish. If your shoes get wet, don't attempt to dry them quickly by placing them in artificial heat or in hot sunshine. Heat will dry out leather's natural oils and encourage the leather to crack.

Taking good care of older people



WE have ever-larger numbers of older people - 'senior citizens' - who need our love and care.

As people grow older they become more prone to physical disorders. Yet elderly people often ignore the symptoms of illness because they don't want to be 'a nuisance', or they're afraid what going into hospital may mean.

When older people's health declines, we shouldn't simply say, 'It's old age.' Much can be done to boost their spirits and enable them to live a happier, more active life. A cataract operation, for example, or providing a hearing-aid, can wonderfully transform an elderly person's situation.

Those over the age of sixty should have regular medical check-ups.

Feeling isolated

Isolation, inactivity and a feeling of not being wanted are common causes of depression in the elderly. We can help by including them in family activities. Those who live alone can be greatly cheered by regular visits and help with shopping, cooking or laundry.

Remember that most older people are 'young in heart', and with support and encouragement are able to live as happily and positively as they did when they were young.

Falls

Elderly people who trip or stumble are often too slow to prevent a fall. Their reflex actions are much slower than those of younger people. Broken bones may result. Women suffer more falls than men, and fractures are more likely because women's bone strength is reduced through the calcium loss that follows the menopause.

If you find someone unconscious or in severe pain following a fall, send for medical help immediately.

To help prevent falls, provide good lighting in the house. Make sure that carpets are stable and not frayed, and that floors are uncluttered and free of trailing wires which could trip someone up. Indoors and out, elderly people should always wear suitable footwear.

It's the hot and humid season for all the family...

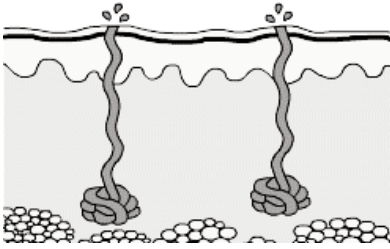


You're a millionaire!

YOU may not have much in your pocket, but in terms of sweat glands you're a millionaire: the average person has three million sweat glands!

Why do we sweat?

Sweat glands are tiny structures deep within the skin.



Each gland is made of a coiled tube in which the sweat is secreted, and a narrow passage-way which carries the sweat to the surface of the skin.

There are two types of sweat gland:

- * *Eccrine glands* are the most common, especially on the palms and soles. They open directly to the skin surface.

- * *Apocrine glands*, which develop at puberty, occur only in hairy areas, particularly the armpits, pubic region and around the anus. They produce cellular material, as well as sweat, and open into a hair follicle before reaching the skin surface.

Eccrine sweat is composed mostly of water (99 per cent) and tiny quantities of dissolved substances, including sodium chlorate (salt); which is why sweat tastes salty.

The activity of the sweat glands is controlled by the automatic nervous system.

Usually the glands are stimulated to produce sweat to keep the body cool. Such sweating is heaviest on the forehead, upper lip, neck and chest.

Sweating can also be caused by anxiety or fear. This sweating mainly appears on the palms, the soles and in the armpits. Sweating also occurs with fevers.

Sweat is odourless until bacteria act upon it, producing body odour.

Hot-weather nuisance

HOT and humid weather may give rise to the itchy, painful rash known as prickly heat. Doctors call it *miliaria*.

Prickly heat occurs when you sweat a lot. Dead skin cells and bacteria block the sweat glands, and your skin becomes inflamed with a spotty rash that may blister.

You are more likely to suffer prickly heat if you are overweight or sweat easily. The rash is most common where clothing causes friction; but it may also occur on hands, feet, under the arms and on the chest.

Babies and young children are more likely to be affected than adults because of their undeveloped sweat glands. In babies the rash is usually found on the nappy area, in the skin folds and on the neck.

The rash usually lasts for a few days and then may disappear on its own - but in our Gambian climate during and after the rainy season prickly heat is likely, unless it's treated, to become persistent and very irritating. When the constant prickling or itching becomes severe, salt crystals may form

in the sweat gland ducts, leading to small blisters. Itching may cause scratching, leading to further skin infection.

You may avoid the condition by using anti-prickly-heat powder after bathing on the vulnerable parts of your body. Calamine lotion can be soothing. But severe cases need anti-fungal creams or other medication. Your doctor or pharmacist will advise. Continue to use the medication for some days after prickly heat appears to have subsided.

Get rid of that unsightly mould



THROUGHOUT the rainy season and at least until late October the atmosphere is humid. At home the dampness, especially in dark, warm places like cupboards, can produce unsightly mildew on clothing and furnishings.

Mould can't flourish where there's light and a current of air. So it's a good idea to leave wardrobe doors ajar until the end of the humid season.

If clothing and fabrics are damp and mildewed, normal washing should remove stains. If necessary, you can add just a little bleach to the washing water.

If your upholstery is suffering from mildew, take the item outside where possible, and knock surface mildew off with a stiff brush. Air the item in the sun. If spots remain, dab with mild disinfectant and rinse.

Black spots on furniture can indicate mildew. Don't just varnish over them, treat them with bleach first.

You can use a mixture of bleach and water to wash down tiles in your bathroom and kitchen. Or use a proprietary cleaner from a supermarket.

Note: *Eau de javel* is much less strong than regular bleach. Make sure you dilute bleach adequately. Keep bleach away from children. Experiment with a small area to be cleaned before applying generally. Wear gloves when applying it.

NB!!

If you feel that you or your child may have malaria, seek medical help immediately.

Delay may lead to dangerous - even fatal - consequences



*Benedicus qui venit in nomine Domini
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord*

Sunday Reflections

Reflections, readings and prayers
from the 18th to the 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time and for *Sang Marie*



2nd August 18th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Bread from heaven

FOR five Sundays (today is the second of them) the Gospel readings don't come from Mark, but from John. These readings concern the teaching of Jesus on the 'Bread of Life'.

In Jesus' day the people knew that the manna from heaven given to their ancestors in the desert (as described in today's First Reading) symbolised messianic blessing; so they asked Jesus for a similar sign.

Jesus encouraged the people to make an act of faith in him so that he could openly reveal to them the mystery of the Eucharist: the Bread from Heaven which we know is his Body in the Mass.

How wonderful and mysterious are Christ's words which close today's Gospel: 'I am the Bread of Life; he who comes to me shall not hunger; and he who believes in me shall never thirst.' As St Paul reminds the Ephesians in today's Second Reading: '...the truth is in Jesus'. But this demands an act of faith, something which many Jews were not ready to make.

What about you and me?

Collect

DRAW near to your servants, O Lord, and answer their prayers with unceasing kindness, that, for those who glory in you as their Creator and guide, you may restore what you have created, and keep safe what you have restored...

Readings: Exodus 16:2-4,12-15. Psalm 77:3-4,23-25,54.
Response: The Lord gave then bread from heaven.
Ephesians 4: 17, 20-24.

Gospel acclamation: Alleluia...Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.

Gospel: John 6: 24-35

Prayer over the gifts

GRACIOUSLY sanctify these gifts, O Lord, we pray, and accepting the oblation of this spiritual sacrifice, make of us an eternal offering to you...

Preface: *the priest may use any one of the eight prefaces provided for use in Ordinary Time.*

Prayer after Communion

ACCOMPANY with constant protection, O Lord, those you renew with these heavenly gifts and, in your never failing care for them, make them worthy of eternal redemption...

9th August 19th Sunday in Ordinary Time

An unacceptable claim?

WE shouldn't be surprised that the Jews found much of Jesus' teaching unpalatable. They were often shocked by him, as in today's Gospel, when he described himself as the bread from heaven, and declared: 'Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever.'

The Jews had strict dietary rules. These rules could not allow them to conceive of eating Jesus' 'flesh for the life of the world'.

How could this man Jesus, supposed son of the carpenter Joseph, make such a preposterous claim?

The claim is surely unacceptable to us, as well - unless we recognise and accept Jesus as true and only Son of God. A mere man could not make such a claim; but Jesus is divine, and his sacrificial, loving help for all mankind was revealed when he in all humility told the Jews and us that he was the bread from heaven.

Collect

ALMIGHTY, ever living God, whom, taught by the Holy Spirit, we dare to call our Father, bring, we pray, to perfection in our hearts the spirit of adoption as your sons and daughters, that we may merit to enter into the inheritance which you have promised...

Readings: 1 Kings 19:4-8. Psalm 33:2-9. Response: Taste and see that the Lord is good. Ephesians 4:30 - 5:2.

Gospel acclamation: Alleluia...I am the living bread which has come down from heaven, says the Lord. Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever.

Gospel: John 6:41-51

Prayer over the Offerings

BE pleased, O Lord, to accept the offerings of your Church, for in your mercy you have given them to be offered, and by your power you transform them into the mystery of our salvation...

Preface: *the priest may use any one of the eight prefaces provided for use in Ordinary Time.*

Prayer after Communion

MAY the Communion in your Sacrament that we have consumed save us, O Lord, and confirm us in the light of your truth.



Friday evening

14th August

Vigil of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin

Mary

See page 4



Collect

O GOD, who looking on the lowliness of the Blessed Virgin Mary, raised her to this grace, that your Only Begotten Son was born of her in the flesh and that she was crowned this day with surpassing glory, grant through her prayers, that, saved by the mystery of your redemption, we may merit to be exalted by you on high...

Readings: 1 Chronicles 15:3-4,15-16 & 16:1-2. Psalm 131:6-7,9-10,13-14. Response: Go up, Lord, to the place of your rest, you and the ark of your strength. 1 Corinthians 15:54-57

Gospel acclamation; Alleluia...Happy are those who hear the word of God, and keep it...

Gospel: Luke 11:27-28

Prayer over the Offerings

RECEIVE, we pray, O Lord, the sacrifice of conciliation and praise, which we celebrate on the Assumption of the holy Mother of God, that it may lead us to your pardon and confirm us in perpetual thanksgiving...

Preface: *as in tomorrow's Mass (Saturday 15th August)*

Prayer after Communion

HAVING partaken of this heavenly table, we beseech your mercy, Lord our God, that we, who honour the Assumption of the Mother of God, may be freed from every threat of harm...

Saturday 15th August The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

See page 4

Collect

ALMIGHTY ever living God, who assumed the Immaculate Virgin Mary, Mother of your Son, body and soul into heavenly glory, grant, we pray, that, always attentive to the things that are above, we may merit to be sharers of her glory...

Readings: Revelation 11:19 & 12:1-6,10. Psalm 44: 10-12,16. Response: On your right stands the queen in garments of gold. 1 Corinthians 15:20-26

Gospel acclamation: Alleluia...Mary has been taken up into heaven: all the choirs of angels are rejoicing.

Gospel: Luke 1:39-56

Prayer over the Offerings

MAY this oblation, our tribute of homage, rise up to you, O Lord, and, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, whom you assumed into heaven, may our hearts, aflame with the fire of love, constantly long for you...

Preface: ...For today the Virgin Mother of God was assumed into heaven as the beginning and image of your Church's coming to perfection and a sign of sure hope and

comfort to your pilgrim people; rightly you would not allow her to see the corruption of the tomb, since from her own body she marvellously brought forth your incarnate Son, the Author of all life...

Prayer after Communion

HAVING received the Sacrament of salvation, we ask you to grant, O Lord, that, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, whom you assumed into heaven, we may be brought to the glory of the resurrection...

16th August

20th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Solemn truth

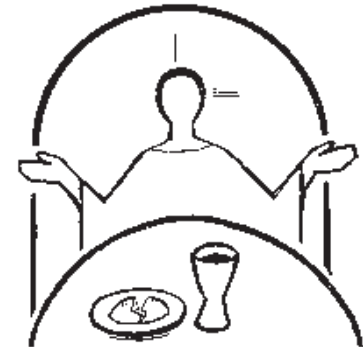
SPEAKING about himself, Jesus told the Jews, 'I tell you most solemnly...' This meant that what he was talking about was for the Jews - and for us, too - of vital importance.

'If you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you can have no life in you.'

Read the whole of John's chapter 6, which shows Fr George Okoro, a priest of the Missionary Society of St Paul of Nigeria, currently serving in Liberia.

Why the Eucharist and Holy Communion are at the heart of the Catholic faith. The Mass is the means by which we experience our unity with our Saviour and his Church, and Holy Communion is a pledge of grace and eternal life.

'We can do nothing more agreeable to Christ,' wrote St Alphonsus Liguori, 'than to go to Holy Communion with the dispositions suitable to so great an action, since we are then united to Jesus Christ, according to the desire of this all-loving God.'



Collect

O GOD, who have prepared for those who love you good things which no eye can see, fill our hearts, we pray, with the warmth of your love, so that serving you in all things and above all things, we may attain your promises, which surpass every human desire...

Readings: Proverbs 9: 1-6. Psalm 33: 2-3,10-15. Response: Taste and see the Lord is good. Ephesians 5: 15-20.

Gospel acclamation: Alleluia...He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me, and I in him.

Gospel: John 6: 51-58

Prayer over the Offerings

RECEIVE our oblation, O Lord, by which is brought about a glorious exchange, that, by offering what you have given, we may merit to receive your very Self...

Preface: *the priest may use any one of the eight prefaces provided for use in Ordinary Time.*

Prayer after Communion

MADE partakers of Christ through these Sacraments, we humbly implore your mercy, Lord, that, conformed to his image on earth, we may merit also to be his co-heirs in heaven...

*23rd August***21st Sunday in Ordinary Time***Message of eternal life*

WE have a choice. When Jesus tells us he is the living bread we can believe him, and we can act on that belief by seeking to know him in Holy Communion and in every aspect of our life.

Or we can shake our heads and turn away, as many of his first disciples did. To accept Jesus as a great teacher and healer was one thing; to accept him as supernatural food was another.

When Jesus asked Peter and the rest of the Twelve, 'Will you also go away?' Peter replied on their behalf, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the message of eternal life.' In other words, however foreign to traditional Jewish teaching Jesus' words seemed to be, Peter and his companions had utter confidence in him. They knew and trusted him intimately, even though they did not yet fully understand his mission and his destiny. For them there was no-one like Jesus, and there could not be anyone else like him.

When we are tempted to fall away we should remember the words of Peter: 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the message of eternal life.'

Collect

O GOD, who cause the minds of the faithful to unite in a single purpose, grant your people to love what you command and to desire what you promise: that, amid the uncertainties of this world, our hearts may be fixed on that place where true gladness is found...

Readings: Joshua 24:1-2,15-18. Psalm 33:2-3,16-23. Response: Taste and see that the Lord is good. Ephesians 5: 21-32.

Gospel acclamation: Alleluia...Your words are spirit, Lord, and they are life: you have the message of eternal life.

Gospel: John 6: 60-69

Prayer over the Offerings

O LORD, who gained for yourself a people by adoption through the one sacrifice offered once for all, bestow graciously on us, we pray, the gifts of unity and peace in your Church...

Preface: *the priest may use any one of the eight prefaces provided for use in Ordinary Time.*

Prayer after Communion

COMPLETE within us, O Lord, we pray, the healing work of your mercy, and graciously perfect and sustain us, so that in all things we may please you...

*30th August***22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time***The man within*

AFTER these past few Sundays - hearing the words of Jesus in St John's Gospel about the mystery of his body and blood - we return for the remaining Sundays in Ordinary Time to the Gospel of St Mark.

The controversies continue, as they do everywhere in all four Gospels - and as they do in our own day. In today's Gospel, pious Jews are complaining, 'Why do your disciples eat with unclean hands?'

Jesus was not against people being physically clean. But conforming to ritual cleanliness is not nearly as important as inner cleanliness: purity of faith, purity of intention. If the outer observances of our religion are not accompanied by inner conviction, they are indeed merely outward show; and we may well be seen by others as hypocrites.

Outward conformity, the comforting ritual observances of Christianity: these are the easiest part of our religion. But getting to know Christ, giving up everything that impedes our growth in him - that is a greater challenge, and much more worthwhile.

As we seek to renew ourselves and our witness to Christ in our own day and in our own diocese, we need first to renew our inner selves: then our outer witness will be apparent and sincere.

Collect

GOD of might, giver of every good gift, put into our hearts the love of your name, so that. By deepening our sense of reverence, you may nurture in us what is good, and, by your watchful care, keep safe what you have nurtured...

Readings: Deuteronomy 4: 1-2 & 6-8. Psalm 14:2-5. Response: The just will live in the presence of the Lord. James 1: 17-18 & 21-22 & 27.

Gospel acclamation: Alleluia...Your words are spirit, Lord, and they are life: you have the message of eternal life.

Gospel: Mark 7: 1-8,14-15,21-23

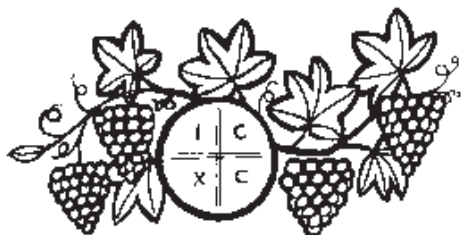
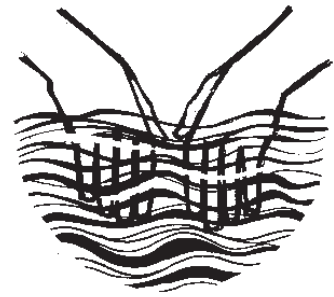
Prayer over the Offerings

MAY this sacred offering, O Lord, confer on us always the blessing of salvation, that what it celebrated in mystery it may accomplish in power...

Preface: *the priest may use any one of the eight prefaces provided for use in Ordinary Time.*

Prayer after Communion

RENEWED by this bread from the heavenly table, we beseech you, Lord, that, being the food of charity, it may confirm our hearts and stir us to serve you in our neighbour...



Lord Jesus, strengthened by the Bread of Heaven
and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit,
may we proclaim the good news of your kingdom

6th September
**23rd Sunday in
 Ordinary Time**

Peace

FOR four Sundays, the Second Reading comes from the Letter of James - generally ascribed to James, 'brother of the Lord' who was bishop in Jerusalem. It is addressed to Christian Jews living outside the Holy Land, and consists of moral teaching.



Today, James urges peace, and says that the pursuit of peace must start within ourselves. This advice is as valuable today in The Gambia and everywhere else as it was when James wrote his letter.

The Gospel tells of Jesus curing a man who was deaf and dumb. The people's admiration for him was 'unbounded... he has done all things well'.

May our own admiration be also unbounded as we seek to follow Christ, who as well as healer is Prince of Peace.

See the illustration of today's Gospel on the back page

Collect

O GOD, by whom we are redeemed and receive adoption, look graciously upon your beloved sons and daughters, that those who believe in Christ may receive true freedom and an everlasting inheritance...

Readings: Isaiah 35: 4-7. Psalm 145:7-10. Response: My soul, give praise to the Lord. James 2: 1-5.

Gospel acclamation: Alleluia... Speak, Lord, your servant is listening: you have the message of eternal life.

Gospel: Mark 7:31-37

Prayer over the Offerings

O GOD, who give us the gift of true prayer and of peace, graciously grant that, through this offering, we may do fitting homage to your divine majesty, and, by partaking of the sacred mystery, we may be faithfully united in mind and heart...

Preface: *the priest may use any one of the eight prefaces provided for use in Ordinary Time.*

Prayer after Communion

GRANT that your faithful, O Lord, whom you nourish and endow with life through the food of your Word and heavenly Sacrament, may so benefit from your beloved Son's great gifts that we may merit an eternal share in his life...

13th September
**24th Sunday in
 Ordinary Time**

The heart of the faith

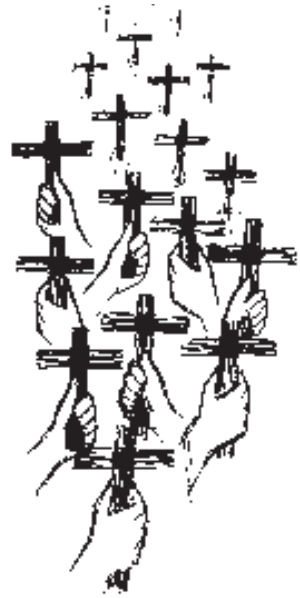
ST MARK'S Gospel is the shortest of all the four Gospels. Mark wastes no time. His very first words are, 'The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.'

In today's reading from the heart of St Mark's Gospel, Jesus asks, 'Who do you say that I am?'

Peter immediately acclaims Jesus as none other than 'the Christ'. ('Christ' is Greek for 'the anointed one' - in Hebrew, 'the Messiah'.)

'Who do you say that I am?' What is our own answer? For two thousand years all sorts of opinions have been held about Jesus - many of them favourable. But unless we believe like Peter and the Church that Jesus is God incarnate - the Christ - we cannot claim the name 'Christian'. A Christian is one who looks to Christ alone for salvation.

And Jesus says: 'Anyone who wants to be a follower of mine must renounce himself, take up his cross and follow me.'



Collect

LOOK upon us, O God, Creator and ruler of all things, and, that we may feel the working of your mercy, grant that we may serve you with all our heart...

Readings: Isaiah 50: 5-9. Psalm 114:1-6,8-9. Response: I will walk in the presence of the Lord, in the land of the living. James 2: 14-18.

Gospel acclamation: Alleluia... I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, says the Lord: no one can come to the Father except through me.

Gospel: Mark 8:27-35

Prayer over the Offerings

LOOK with favour on our supplications, O Lord, and in your kindness accept these, your servants' offerings, that what each has offered to the honour of your name may serve the salvation of all...

Preface: *the priest may use any one of the eight prefaces provided for use in Ordinary Time.*

Prayer after Communion

MAY the working of this heavenly gift, O Lord, we pray, take possession of our minds and bodies, so that its effects, and not our own desires, may always prevail in us...

Reminder

MANY Catholics who have been careless about regular attendance at Sunday Mass may wish to make a fresh start. *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 - that is, free of serious sin.

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

20th September
25th Sunday in
Ordinary Time

Servant of all

WE members of the Church sometimes refer to ourselves as the 'People of God' and the 'new Israel', but we don't always live up to such lofty designations. James writes of 'jealousy and ambition' (not unknown among us Christians!) and 'wars and battles among yourselves' (again, not unknown among us!).

Jesus found his own followers arguing about which of them was the greatest. It was hard for them to understand that the kingdom of God is founded on service to others. Yet Jesus came among us as 'one who serves' - even to dying for our salvation. His perfect sacrifice demands our thankful service.

Whether in the small daily routines of life or at times of doubt, danger and challenge, we need to ask: 'Am I seeking my own advantage here, or seeking to serve God?'

Collect

O GOD, who founded all the commands of your sacred Law upon love of you and of our neighbour, grant that, by keeping your precepts, we may merit to obtain eternal life...

Readings: Wisdom 2:12,17-20. Psalm 53:3-6,8. Response: The Lord upholds my life. James 3: 16 - 4:3.

Gospel acclamation: Alleluia... I am the light of the world, says the Lord; anyone who follows me will have the light of life.

Gospel: Mark 9:30-37

Prayer over the Offerings

RECEIVE with favour, O Lord, we pray, the offerings of your people, that what they profess with devotion and faith may be theirs through these heavenly mysteries...

Preface: *the priest may use any one of the eight prefaces provided for use in Ordinary Time.*

Prayer after Communion

GRACIOUSLY raise up, O Lord, those you renew through this Sacrament, that we may come to possess your redemption both in mystery and the manner of our life...

*Lord Jesus, grant that we may share in
your divine life at the Eucharist
and in the world to come*



27th September
26th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Condemnation

THERE are strong words in today's reading from the Letter of James, and equally strong words in the reading from the Gospel.

James denounces rich people whose wealth comes from the exploitation of others. He echoes the frequent condemnation of arrogant and selfish rich people in the Old Testament, notably in the Psalms. And in today's Gospel, Jesus condemns those who create obstacles to the faith of others, especially the young and innocent.



Both James and Jesus speak of 'fire' - of punishment for those who wilfully sin. Just punishment as the outcome of the corrosion and corruption of sin is an aspect of our religion that many of us would rather not think about.

On the other hand, anyone who performs a good action in Jesus' name earns his approval; and elsewhere, James commends all such 'good works' - look back at the reading from James for Sunday 13th September.

Collect

O GOD, who manifest your almighty power above all by pardoning and showing mercy, bestow, we pray, your grace abundantly upon us, and make those hastening to attain your promises heirs to the treasures of heaven...

Readings: Numbers 11:25-29. Psalm 18:8,10,12-14. Response: The precepts of the Lord gladden the heart. James 5:1-6.

Gospel acclamation: Alleluia... Your word is truth, O Lord; consecrate us in the truth.

Gospel: Mark 9:38-43,45,47-48

Prayer over the Offerings

GRANT us, O merciful God, that this our offering may find acceptance with you, and that through it the wellspring of all blessing may be laid open upon us...

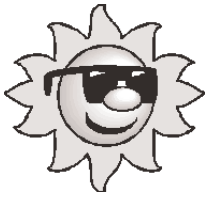
Preface: *the priest may use any one of the eight prefaces provided for use in Ordinary Time.*

Prayer after Communion

MAY this heavenly mystery, O Lord, restore us in mind and body, that we may be co-heirs in glory with Christ, to whose suffering we are united whenever we proclaim his Death...

Answers to 'Do you know?' (page 4)

- 1 Aaron (Exodus 12:1-14)
- 2 Kerr Moussa is the Benedictine monastery in Senegal founded in 1962 by six monks from Solesmes, France, as the first such foundation in West Africa. The first Abbot was Dom Philippe Champetier de Ribes. The first three African priest-monks were ordained in 1985. The abbey became autonomous in 1988. Dom Philippe was succeeded in 2000 by Dom Ange-Marie Niouky.
- 3 St Paul (Acts 23:6)
- 4 The First Eucharistic Prayer, which was the only Eucharistic Prayer in the 'old' Mass used before Vatican II.
- 5 Fr Myles Fay CSSp. He served in Ireland, then in Nigeria - which he had to leave after 10 years, following the civil war. He then served in Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Rome and Chicago. In 1995, after teaching in the Spiriran seminary at Enugu, Nigeria, he became Assistant Priest at Star of the Sea Bakau. While on leave in Ireland in 2002 he died of a stroke, aged 79.



Fee moi Gambia

A life of service

Fifteen years ago in Zimbabwe, on 8th July 2000, the death occurred of a remarkable Anglican missionary, Roderic Norman Coote, who had spent 15 years in The Gambia, five of them as a bishop.

Coote was born in England of Irish stock and followed family tradition by attending Trinity College Dublin. Over six feet tall, he was four times Irish 110-metre hurdles champion, and played squash well into his 60s.

Coote was ordained in 1939 and spent three years in Dublin before coming by sea to The Gambia in 1942, during the Second World War.

Communications in The Gambia in those days were poor, but young Coote travelled a lot by boat and bicycle. Asked about his many Muslim friends, he said that he hoped any educational work he did would make them better Muslims.

In 1951 Coote was made Anglican Bishop of Gambia and Rio Pongas and the youngest bishop in the Anglican communion, in succession to Bishop John Daly.

Bishop Coote was said to be always approachable and ready to stand up for Gambians against the colonial government.

In 1957 he returned to England (his successor being Bishop St John Pike) and became Bishop of Fulham, and then Bishop of Colchester. He married in 1964. In 1999 his wife, a health administrator, was invited to Zimbabwe to help design a hospital. The bishop went with her. His pre-election 'dream for Zimbabwe' appeared in every local newspaper, in which he urged people to turn from violence and recognise that 'fulfilment in life is the fruit of service to others'. He added: 'I cannot vote, but I can pray.'

Welcome development

IT'S begun: the phasing-out of the provision of flimsy plastic bags in supermarkets and other shops.

Can we look forward to a progressively cleaner environment, above all in our crowded urban areas? I do hope so; but despite some years of set-settal, many people, including the young, still seem indifferent. Still, there are signs here and there of improvement; so hope springs eternal...

Worth trying?

WHENEVER I look at the internet I see 'Five ways to get slimmer', or 'Six ways to make an instant impression on others', or 'Ten places you must see before you die'. So when I saw 'Five ways to make yourself immediately happier', I almost didn't read it. But actually, it made some sense.

Here are the 'five ways to happiness':

- * listen to a favourite piece of music
- spend five more minutes with someone you like
- go outdoors
- help someone else
- have a new experience

Professor Paul Dolan of the London School of Economics says that if you listen to music that you like, 'Your brain literally lights up. There is no other stimulation like music to arouse the brain.'

He goes on, 'Spend five minutes more with someone you like, and go outdoors. And helping someone is important. It's a great source of happiness for you. Just randomly help someone and see the difference.'

'Having a new experience is really important. The great thing about new experiences is they actually slow time down. It's why life feels so slow for children because they are experiencing new things all the time. So if you want to slow down time, have as many new experiences as you can.'

I think these 'five ways' are worth trying. They can be used by anyone, anywhere. And they're compatible with Christian living.

Someone told me the other day: 'The secret of happiness is turning off your mobile telephone.' There may be some truth in that, too...

Please excuse me now, while I read on the internet, '40 age-reversing super-foods'!

Lest we forget...

REMEMBER ebola? Now that the epidemic has receded, it's not so often on our minds. Yet it was only recently that many people in three West African countries were exposed to suffering and death, and there were economic repercussions over a larger area.

I've been reading an account by a Nigerian missionary priest serving in Liberia who had no easy time.

Fr George Okoro of the Missionary Society of St Paul of Nigeria, currently serving in Liberia, writes: 'Baptism, anointing the sick and the laying on of hands were suspended. Sick calls, too, were put on hold.'

'We resorted to praying for sick people by telephone. We carried on with the Sacrament of Reconciliation, though we ensured that the penitent maintained what we considered a reasonable distance...

'Ash Wednesday was a real challenge... I rummaged through the liturgical rites to see if I could find a way to circumvent the signing of ash. There was none.

Thus, on the first day of Lent, I just had to sign people on the forehead with ash. I braced myself for the worst. Fortunately, my greatest fear never came to pass.

'The next challenge was on the Easter Vigil, when I had to baptise twenty-seven people, among whom were two ebola survivors. After the Easter ceremony, I quarantined myself.

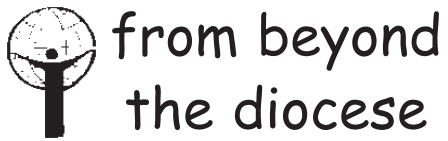
'The resilience of the people in the face of ebola was touching. One could see a certain defiance in the attitude of the people to this agent of death.

'I have to come to learn that no matter how dire any situation is, human life will always find a way to thrive. This is a lesson I could never have learnt in the classroom.'

Dusty (or rusty) answer

INDIGNANT customer to used-car salesman: 'When I bought this car, you gave me an absolute assurance that it was rust-free.'

Salesman: 'So it was, Sir. We didn't charge you for the rust.'



from beyond
the diocese

Greed is enslaving the poor and harming the Earth, says Francis



POPE Francis, addressing an international gathering in Bolivia, has said that the global economic system 'has imposed the mentality of profit at any price, with no concern for social exclusion or the destruction of nature... The current system is intolerable.'

The Pope went on: 'Time, my brothers and sisters, seems to be running out; we are not yet tearing one another apart, but we are tearing apart our common home, the Earth... and behind all this pain, death and destruction there is the stench of what Basil of Caesarea called "the dung of the devil" – an unfettered pursuit of money.'

Making a difference

Most people, including the poor, the Pope said, wonder how they can make a difference in the face of such huge problems and an economic system that seems to shrug off any effort at accountability. He urged participants to look to Mary, 'a humble girl from a small town lost on the fringes of a great empire, a homeless mother who turned an animals' stable into a home for Jesus with just a few swaddling clothes and much tenderness'.

The Pope and the Catholic Church do not have a programme or recipe for solving the problems of injustice and poverty in the world, he said. But it is clear that the economy should be 'at the service of peoples. Human beings and nature must not be at the service of money.'

'Forgive the Church's offences'

Pope Francis also addressed indigenous people about the Catholic Church's co-operation with the Spanish and Portuguese who settled much of the Americas.

'I say this to you with regret: many grave sins were committed against the native peoples of America in the name of God. Here I wish to be quite clear, as was St John Paul II: I humbly ask forgiveness, not only for the offences of the Church herself, but also for crimes committed against the native peoples during the so-called conquest of America.'

At the same time, Pope Francis asked people to recognise that many Catholics - priests, nuns and laity - willingly gave their lives in service to the continent's peoples.

Pope ends his South America visit

ON Sunday 12th July, the last day of his three-nation visit to South America, Pope Francis celebrated Mass with nearly a million people at Asuncion, capital of Paraguay.

Tens of thousands of people from Argentina, including President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner and the Greek Orthodox Metropolitan Tarasios of Buenos Aires, attended the Mass.

In his homily the Pope said, 'One thing is sure: We cannot force anyone to receive us, to welcome us; this is itself part of our poverty and freedom. At the same time, no one can tell us not to accept and embrace the lives of our brothers and sisters, especially those who have lost hope and zest for life.'

Mission, evangelisation and sharing the faith are not programmes, the Pope said; they flow from a way of living in response to God's blessings... 'You do not convince people with arguments, strategies or tactics. You convince them by learning how to welcome them... The Church is a mother with an open heart. She knows how to welcome and accept, especially those in need of greater care, those in greater difficulty.'

Francis to visit Cuba and the US

POPE Francis is to visit Cuba and the US between Sunday 19th and Sunday 27th September.

It will be his third visit to the Americas after Brazil in 2013 and his recent trip to Ecuador, Bolivia and Paraguay, and his tenth trip abroad since his election in 2013.

The Pope will spend three days in Cuba, meeting President Raol Castro, young people, families and religious as well as presiding at Mass and Vespers on all three days.

In the USA, Francis will meet homeless people in Washington on Thursday 24th September, children and immigrant families at a Catholic school in Harlem, New York on Friday 25th September, and prisoners in Philadelphia on Sunday 27th September. The closing Mass for the World Meeting of Families will follow the Pope's meeting with prisoners.

President Obama will welcome Francis to the White House on 23rd September; and that afternoon Pope Francis will celebrate Mass at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception and canonise Blessed Junipero Serra.

On 24th September the Pope will address a joint meeting of the US Congress - the first Pope to do so; and the following day he will address the UN General Assembly.



Pope Francis with Raol Castro, Cuban President

First visit to Africa

Pope Francis is to visit Uganda and the Central African Republic from 27th to 29th November. It will be his first visit to Africa. He will be in Uganda to mark the 50th anniversary of Pope Paul VI's canonisation of 22 Catholic martyrs, Christian converts who were executed in the 19th century.

Mother Teresa's successor dies at 81



SISTER Nirmala Joshi, who succeeded Blessed Mother Teresa as the leader of the Missionaries of Charity from 1997 to 2009, has died at the age of 81.

Sr Nirmala took over as Superior-General of the order, based in Calcutta, India, after Mother Teresa's death in 1997.

Archbishop D'Souza of Calcutta told the *Indian Express* that Sr Nirmala had been suffering from a heart condition and had recently moved back to a Missionaries of Charity home in the city after a period in hospital. He added: 'She breathed her last peacefully. She was a great soul.'

The current Superior-General is Sr Mary Prema Pierick.

Saudi prince to give away \$32 billion

PRINCE Al-Waleed bin Talal, the Saudi Arabian billionaire and one of the richest people in the world, announced on 1st July that he will donate his wealth of \$32 billion to charity.



The money will go to the prince's organisation, Alwaleed Philanthropies, to work in 'inter-cultural understanding' and supporting communities in need. Programmes will include promoting good health, eradicating disease, bringing electricity to remote villages, building orphanages and schools, and 'empowering women'.

The prince, who is chairman of the investment firm Kingdom Holding Company, said he has already given \$3.5 billion to the charitable organisation.

'Philanthropy is a personal responsibility which I embarked upon more than three decades ago and is an intrinsic part of my Islamic faith,' the prince said during Ramadan, when Muslims are encouraged to help the needy.

Though he did not give an exact time-frame, Alwaleed said his billions would be allocated through a 'well-devised plan' throughout the coming years. He said the donations would be supervised by a board of trustees, which he will head.

Pope creates new Vatican communications department

POPE Francis has established a new Secretariat for Communications to co-ordinate the Holy See's multiple communications outlets.

The development of digital media, with its converging technologies and interactive capabilities, 'requires a rethinking of the information system of the Holy See', the Pope wrote.

Mgr Dario Vigano, Director of the Vatican Television Centre, is to lead the secretariat as Prefect.

Nine Vatican media operations will be gradually integrated over the next four years while protecting people's jobs. They are the Pontifical Council for Social Communications; the Vatican press office; the Vatican internet office; Vatican Radio;

the Vatican television production studio, CTV; the Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*; the Vatican printing press; the Vatican photograph service; and the Vatican publishing house, *Libreria Editrice Vaticana*.

The new department will take on the Vatican website, www.vatican.va, and the Pope's official Twitter account: @pontifex.

'Love-song to the Lord'



BENEDICTINE monks have released an album of 33 songs entitled '*Benedicta*: Marian chant from Norcia', centred on the Virgin Mary as celebrated in the liturgy.

Norcia is the birthplace of St Benedict, founder of the Benedictine Order. The town is about 70 miles north-east of Rome. The Benedictine community there operates a brewery and spends hours every day singing the Mass and the divine office. Two-thirds of the monks are from the United States. Others come from Brazil, Canada, Germany, Indonesia and Italy.

Fr Cassian Folsom, head of the community, declares: 'There's a lot of pollution in our world, and the pure oxygen of Gregorian chant is like a breath of fresh air. We decided to do a Marian CD because our monastery is dedicated to Our Lady, Seat of Wisdom.'

He adds that passing trends are truly passing, prompting thoughts about things that endure, and he describes *Benedicta* as timeless and enchanting: 'Our hearts long for these things, even in our contemporary culture... the chant is the Church's love-song to her Lord.'

The CD is distributed by Decca/Universal Music Classics

Asylum seekers to be 'relocated'

IN late June, after considerable debate, European Union leaders agreed that EU governments should over the next two years find new homes across the 28-member bloc for 40,000 asylum seekers at present being sheltered in Italy and Greece.

The EU seeks to relocate migrants based on factors such as population, gross domestic product and unemployment in the various EU countries.

Amnesty International says that cruelty and abuse faced by migrants in Libya have forced many to undertake the dangerous Mediterranean crossings to reach Europe.

People fleeing conflicts in other parts of Africa and the Middle East have also added to the swelling numbers of refugees landing on southern European shores. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees says that from January to June this year 63,000 migrants arrived in Greece and 62,000 in Italy.



'Give to God what you have found within your heart'

A step-by-step guide to praying the Bible through *Lectio Divina*

LECTIO divina is a contemplative way of praying the Scriptures. The time we set aside for *lectio divina* enables us to discover in our daily lives an underlying spiritual rhythm. We discover an increasing ability to offer more of ourselves and our relationships to the Father and to accept the embrace of his Son, Jesus Christ.

Very often our concerns, relationships, hopes and aspirations intertwine with our meditations on the Scriptures. We can attend 'with the ear of our hearts' to our memories and listen for God's presence in our lives. We experience Christ through our own memories. Our own personal story becomes salvation history.

How to practise *Lectio Divina*

- **Choose a Bible text.** Many Christians use one of the readings from the Mass of the day. Others prefer to work slowly through a particular book of the Bible. It makes no difference which text is chosen, as long as one has no set goal of 'covering' a certain amount of text. The amount of text covered is in God's hands, not yours.

- **Place yourself in a comfortable position and allow yourself to become silent.** Some Christians focus for a few moments on their breathing; others have a 'prayer word' or 'prayer phrase' they gently recite. Use whatever method is best for you, and allow yourself to enjoy silence for a few moments.

- **Turn to the text and read it slowly.** Savour each portion of the reading, constantly listening for the 'still, small voice' of a word or phrase that somehow says, 'I am for you today.'

Do not expect ecstasies. In *lectio divina* God teaches us to listen to him, and to seek him in silence. He does not reach out and grab us; rather, he gently invites us ever more deeply into his presence.

- **Take the word or phrase into yourself.** Memorise it and slowly repeat it to yourself, allowing it to inter-act with your inner world of concerns, memories and ideas.

Do not be afraid of distractions. Memories or thoughts are simply parts of yourself that, when they arise during *lectio divina*, are asking to be given to God along with the rest of your inner self. Allow this inner pondering to invite you into dialogue with God.

- **Speak to God.** Whether you use words, ideas or images - or all three - is not important. Inter-act with God as you would with One you know loves and accepts you. Give to him what you have discovered during your meditation.

Experience God by using the word or phrase he has given you as a means of blessing and of transforming the ideas and memories that your reflection on his word has awakened. Give to God what you have found within your heart.

- **Rest in God's embrace.** When God invites you to return to your contemplation of his word or to your inner dialogue with him, do so. Learn to use words when words are helpful, and to let go of words when they are no longer necessary. Rejoice in the knowledge that God is with you in both words and silence, in spiritual activity and inner receptivity.

Sometimes in *lectio divina* you may return several times to the printed text, either to savour the literary context of the word or phrase that God has given, or to seek a new word or phrase to ponder. At other times, only a single word or phrase will fill the whole time set aside for *lectio divina*.

It is not necessary to assess anxiously the quality of your *lectio divina*, as if you were 'performing', or seeking some goal. *Lectio divina* has no goal other than that of being in the presence of God by praying the Scriptures.

Lectio Divina as a group exercise

A corporate form of *lectio divina* is becoming common, in which a Bible text is meditated on by Christians praying in a group.

This form of *lectio divina* works best in a group of between four and eight people. A leader co-ordinates proceedings and facilitates sharing. The Bible text is read out three times, followed each time by a period of silence and an opportunity for each member of the group to share the fruit of his or her *lectio*.



The first reading is for the purpose of hearing a word or passage that touches the heart. The members of the group take it in, gently recite it, and reflect on it during the silence that follows. After the silence, each person shares which word or phrase has touched his or her heart.

The second reading is for the purpose of 'hearing' or 'seeing' Christ in the text. Each ponders the word and asks where the word or phrase has touched his or her life that day. Then, after the silence, each member of the group shares what he or she has 'heard' or 'seen'.

The third and final reading is for the purpose of experiencing Christ 'calling us forth' into doing or being. Members ask themselves what Christ in the text is calling them to do or to become today or this week.

After the silence, each shares for the last time, and the exercise concludes with each person praying for the person on his or her right or left.

This article is based on material by Fr Luke Dysinger OS

Recommended for guided daily prayer:
www.sacredspace

Gambian Christian anniversaries

August and September

FIVE years ago, on 17th September 2010, pupils from St John Vianney's School, Bulock, took part at GPI in a live television link with London. They were part of a programme in which Pope Benedict XVI, then visiting Britain, addressed 3,000 school children at St Mary's University in London, watched on television by every Catholic school in Britain. The Pope wore a blue and white stole sent to him from The Gambia. The boys and girls from Bulock were the only ones outside the United Kingdom to take part in the programme.



9th September 1934: Death at sea of Fr O'Sullivan, who had arrived the previous April and was being repatriated due to ill health.

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

15th September 1954: Death of Fr John Meehan CSSp, who had served the Mission for 50 years - 38 of them, from 1908 to 1946, as Superior.

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

1st August 1964: Opening of the new school building at Lamin.

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

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

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

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

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

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

7th August 1988: Brothers Henry, Milton and Senan of the Indian Province of the Christian Brothers took up residence at Sam Jack Terrace Banjul in the house bequeathed to the diocese by Dr Felix Blain.

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

13th August 2003: Death in Britain of Coleridge Wallace Cole, former Director of Education, WAEC Representative in London and Headmaster of Marina International School.

1st August 2006: Fr Joseph Kabo (right) succeeded Sr Philomena Barry as Director of the Gambia Pastoral Institute.

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



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

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

15th August 2007 (Sang Marie): Bishop Ellison convened a Diocesan Assembly to be held in March/ April 2008.

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

21st September 2008: an accident during tree-felling at St Francis Nursery School Tranquil brought down the D20,000 new roof and smashed newly-acquired furniture.

9th-17th August 2009: A Sisters' retreat at Shalom was conducted by Monsignor Daniel Camara of Makenni Diocese, Sierra Leone.

22nd August 2009: Death in Ireland aged 64 of Fr Michael Murray CSSp (right) who worked in The Gambia from 1973 to 1981.

25th-28th August 2009: Around 60 young people took part in a youth camp at Basse.

8th September 2009: Fr Joseph Kabo blessed the grotto 'Nazareth' at the Presentation Sisters convent in Brikama.

21st September 2009: Death of Dermot Roach, an Irish layman who since the mid 1990s had helped many students. He worked at Our Lady of Fatima School Bwiam, then lived in retirement at Kunkujang Mariama.

5th August 2010: The Choir of Blessed Sacrament Kanifing began a visit to Dakar, where they performed a concert and sung at the Cathedral.

24th August 2010: Death of Monsignor Maixent Coly (right) Bishop of Ziguinchor since 1995.

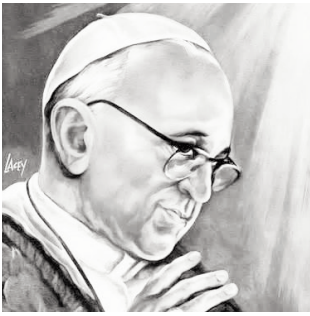
15th September 2011: Sr Jeanne-Therese of the Sisters of St Joseph of Cluny celebrated the golden jubilee of her profession.

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



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Save our Earth!

In his 'both joyful and troubling' encyclical *Laudato Si'* Pope FRANCIS declares that the Earth, created to support life and give praise to God, is crying out with pain

IN FEBRUARY Pope Francis issued his much-anticipated encyclical *Laudato Si'* ('Praise be to you'), in which he asserts that the Earth is approaching a breaking-point.

The Pope asserts: 'While we may think that there is always a way out, that we can always redirect our steps, that we can always do something to solve our problems, there are signs that things are now reaching a breaking point, due to the rapid pace of change and degradation...'

Francis refers to large-scale natural disasters as well as social and financial crises, asserting that the world's problems cannot be analysed or explained in isolation: 'The present world system is certainly unsustainable from a number of points of view, for we have stopped thinking about the goals of human activity.'

Disturbing climate warming

On climate change, the Pope says 'a very solid scientific consensus indicates that we are presently witnessing a disturbing warming of the climatic system' that is either 'produced or aggravated' by human activity. All who believe in God and all people of good have an obligation to take steps to mitigate climate change, clean the land and the seas, and start treating all of creation - including poor people - with respect and concern.

Francis stresses that a lack of respect for creation is a lack of respect for God who created all that exists: in fact, a person cannot claim to respect nature while supporting abortion, nor can one claim to be pro-life without a commitment to reversing damage to the environment.

'Immense pile of filth'

In blunt language, Pope Francis decries several centuries of exploiting the Earth, exploiting people and acting as if the point of human life is to buy and consume as much as possible: He says, 'The Earth, our

home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth.'

The Pope insists that wealthier nations must bear more of the costs of remedying the damage, and calls for their solidarity with the poorest of the earth. He urges generosity in transferring clean technology, protecting small farms, opening access to markets and protecting people's jobs.

Quoting St John Paul II and the Church's social doctrine, Pope Francis says that the Church recognises the right to private property, but that right is never absolute or inviolable, since the goods of the Earth were created to benefit all.

On pollution and environmental destruction, the Pope says it is important to acknowledge 'the human origins of the ecological crisis', and though ecology is not only a religious concern, those who believe in God should be especially passionate on the subject, because they profess the divine origin of all creation.

Pope Francis has high praise for the Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople, who has made environmental theology a key topic of his teaching since the early 1990s.

People are fooling themselves, the Pope says, if they think that 'things do not look that serious, and the planet could continue as it is for some time'.

Such people in are giving themselves permission to carry on with their current lifestyles and habits; their attitude is 'self-destructive'.

Francis of Assisi and 'Mother Earth'

Francis's language is often poetic, echoing St Francis of Assisi's celebrated *Canticle of the Creatures*, which is the source of *Laudato si'* in the encyclical's title.

The canticle is well-known for its reference to 'Brother Sun', 'Sister Moon' and 'our sister, Mother Earth'.

Pope Francis writes that while we cannot put all living beings on the same level nor deprive human beings of their unique worth and the great responsibility it entails, St Francis's hymn expresses the truth that God is creator of all things, that every part of creation speaks of God's love and power, and that every created being is part of interdependent whole.

'Everything is related,' the Pope insists, 'and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth.'



'Be serious and courageous'

Pope Francis calls on governments and leaders of international institutions to be serious and courageous in adopting measures to slow and reverse global warming, protect rain forests and ensure the availability of clean water for all.



Courage will be needed, he says, to adopt policies that may initially slow the pace of economic growth, but which will be farsighted in ensuring a future for their voters, their voters' grandchildren and all humanity.

Francis declares: 'We know that technology based on the use of highly-polluting fossil fuels - especially coal, but also oil and, to a lesser degree, gas - needs to be progressively replaced without delay.'

The Pope calls on every Catholic and all people of good will to do their part by using only non-polluting detergents, recycling paper and using public transport.

Saying grace before meals

The Pope urges Catholics to return to the practice of saying grace before meals, a habit that reminds them that the food they are about to eat is a gift that comes from the earth and from God.

Pope Francis offers two prayers he has composed himself: 'A Prayer for Our Earth' and 'A Christian Prayer in Union with Creation'.

The first prayer asks God to 'bring healing to our lives that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction'.

The second prayer includes the petition, 'O Lord, seize us with your power and light, help us to protect all life, to prepare for a better future, for the coming of your kingdom of justice, peace, love and beauty.'

Catholics should 'cultivate simplicity'

Pope Francis urges Catholics to cultivate simplicity, saying that it is good for the soul and for the planet. 'A constant flood

of new consumer goods can baffle the heart and prevent us from cherishing each thing and each moment.'

The encyclical presents the vision of an 'integral ecology' that highlights the interconnectedness of all created life and recognises how political, economic, social and religious values and decisions are interrelated and impact the way people live with one another on the planet and use its resources.

'A sense of deep communion with the rest of nature cannot be real if our hearts lack tenderness, compassion and concern for our fellow human beings,' Pope Francis says. For example, 'It is clearly inconsistent to combat trafficking in endangered species while remaining completely indifferent to human trafficking, unconcerned about the poor, or undertaking to destroy another human being deemed unwanted... Everything is connected... Concern for the environment thus needs to be joined to a sincere love for our fellow human beings and an unwavering commitment to resolving the problems of society.'

What is an encyclical?

AN ENCYCLICAL is a circular letter.

In modern times, the word is virtually only used for letters from the Pope to all bishops in communion with Rome, or to bishops of a particular country - or, if the Pope so desires, to the whole Church.

In the case of *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis appeals not only to Catholics, but to all people of goodwill everywhere.

Letters issued by a bishop to the faithful in his diocese are known as 'pastoral letters'.

St Francis' book of nature

St Francis is the example *par excellence* of care for the vulnerable and of an integral ecology lived out joyfully and authentically. He is the patron saint of all who study and work in ecology, and he is loved by non-Christians. He was particularly concerned for God's creation and for the poor and outcast. He lived in simplicity and in harmony with God, with others, with nature and with himself. He shows us how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace.

The poverty and austerity of St Francis were no mere veneer of asceticism, but something much more radical: a refusal to turn reality into an object simply to be used and controlled. St Francis, faithful to Scripture, invites us to see nature as a book in which God grants us a glimpse of his infinite beauty and goodness.



God grants us a glimpse of
Pope Francis, in *Laudato Si'*



Praise for Patriarch

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew [of Constantinople] has repeatedly challenged us to acknowledge our sins against creation: 'To commit a crime against the natural world is a sin against ourselves and a sin against God.'

Bartholomew asks us to replace consumption with sacrifice, greed with generosity, wastefulness with a spirit of sharing, an asceticism which entails 'moving gradually away from what I want to what God's world needs...'

Pope Francis, in *Laudato Si'*



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LIST OF BRANCHES & IMPLANTS

1. Bakau New Town	6868820	20. Kairaba Avenue	6868801
2. Bakoteh	6868816	21. Kaw Junction L/Kunda	6868861
3. Barra, North Bank Region	6868858	22. Kololi Highway	6868832
4. Banjul Lemam Street	6868806	23. Lamin Village Opp Galp	6868815
5. Bansang	6969915	24. Latrikunda Sabiji	6868847
6. Basse Santa Su	6868839	25. London Corner	6868807
7. Basse Highway	6969865	26. Old Jeshwang	6868831
8. Brikama Nyambai	6968874	27. Old Yundum Market	6868843
9. Brikama Hawla Kunda	6868810	28. Sanyang	6868824
10. Brusubi Mini Market	6868819	29. Sayer Jobe Avenue	6868808
11. Brusubi Galp Station	6969873	30. Serrekunda Bartess	6868836
12. Bundung	6868821	31. Serekunda Mosque Road	6868814
13. Busumballa	6868827	32. Soma	6868837
14. Churchill's Town	6868817	33. Sukuta	6868856
15. Cooperative	6868822	34. Tabokoto	6868813
16. Dippakunda	6868812	35. Tallinding	6868809
17. Fajara	6868825	36. Westfield Opp. World Mobile	6868910
18. Farafenni	6868838	37. Westfield Next to Church	6868864
19. Kanifing Estate	6868842		



Daily Mass Readings



August & September 2015

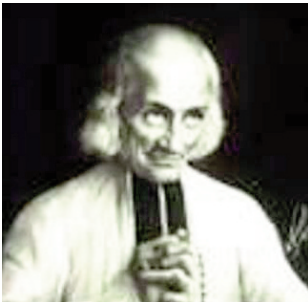
Sunday readings Year B Weekday readings Year 1

Memorials in brackets are optional

Sat 1st Aug	Leviticus 25:1,8-17. Psalm 67:2-3,5,7-8. Matthew 14:1-12	(St Alfonso Maria de' Liguori)
Sun 2nd	Exodus 16:2-4,2-15. Psalm 78:3-4,23-25,54. Ephesians 4:17,20-24. John 6:24-35	18th SUNDAY of YEAR
Mon 3rd	Numbers 11:4-15. Psalm 81:12-17. Matthew 14:13-21	St John Mary Vianney
Tue 4th	Numbers 12:1-13. Psalm 51:3-7,12-13. Matthew 14:22-36 or 15:1-2,10-14	
Wed 5th	Numbers 13:1-2,25 - 14:1.26-29,34-35. Psalm 106:6-7,13-14,21-23. Matthew 15:21-28	(Dedication of St Mary's Basilica)
Thu 6th	or for St Mary's Basilica: Revelation 21:1-5. Psalm Judith 13:18-19. Luke 11:27-28	TRANSFIGURATION of THE LORD
Fri 7th	Daniel 7:9-10,13-14. Psalm 97:1-2,5-6,9. 2 Peter 1: 16-19. Mark 9:2-10	(St Syxtus II or St Cajeton) <i>abstinence</i>
Sat 8th	Deuteronomy 4:32-40. Psalm 77:12-16,21. Matthew 16:24-28	St Dominic
	Deuteronomy 6:4-13. Psalm 18:2-4,47,51. Matthew 17:14-20	
Sun 9th	1 Kings 19:4-8. Psalm 34:2-9. Ephesians 4: 30 - 5:2. John 6:41-51	19th SUNDAY of YEAR
Mon 10th	2 Corinthians 9:6-10. Psalm 112:1-2,5-9. John 12:24-26	St LAURENCE
Tue 11th	Deuteronomy 31:1-8. Psalm Deuteronomy 32:3-4, 7-9,12. Matthew 18:1-5,10,12-14.	St Clare
Wed 12th	Deuteronomy 34:1-12. Psalm 66:1-3,5,8,16-17. Matthew 18:15-20	(St Jane Frances de Chantal)
Thu 13th	Joshua 3:7-10; 11:13-17. Psalm 114:1-6, Matthew 18:21 - 19:1	(St Pontianus & St Hippolytus)
Fri 14th	Joshua 24:1-13. Psalm 136:1-3,16-18,21-22,24. Matthew 19:3-12	St Maximilian Kolbe <i>abstinence</i>
	<i>Evening Mass of the Assumption:</i>	
	1 Chronicles 15:3-4,15-16 & 16: 1-2. Psalm 132:6-7,9-10,13-14. 1 Corinthians 15:54-57. Luke 11:27-28	
Sat 15th	Revelation 11:9 & 12:1-6,10. Psalm 45:10-12,16. 1 Corinthians 15:20-27. Luke 1:39-46	ASSUMPTION of the BVM
Sun 16th	Proverbs 9:1-6. Psalm 34:2-7. Ephesians 5:15-20. John 6:51-58	20th SUNDAY of YEAR
Mon 17th	Judges 2:11-19. Psalm 106:34-37,39-40,43-44. Matthew 19:16-22	
Tue 18th	Judges 6:11-24. Psalm 85:9,11-14. Matthew 19:23-30	
Wed 19th	Judges 9:6-15. Psalm 21:2-7. Matthew 20:1-16	(St John Eudes)
Thu 20th	Judges 11:29-39. Psalm 40:5,7-10. Matthew 22:1-14	St Bernard
Fri 21st	Ruth 1:1.3-6,14-16,22. Psalm 146:5-9. Matthew 22:34-40	St Pius X <i>abstinence</i>
Sat 22nd	Ruth 2:1.3,8-11,13-17. Psalm 128:1-5. Matthew 23:1-12	
	or Isaiah 9:2-4,6-7. Psalm 128. Luke 1:26-38.	BVM, Queen of Heaven
Sun 23rd	Joshua 24:1-2,15-18. Psalm 34:2-3,16-19. Ephesians 5:21-32. John 6:60-69	21st SUNDAY of YEAR
Mon 24th	Revelation 21:9-14. Psalm 145:10-13,17-18. John 1:45-51	St BARTHOLOMEW
Tue 25th	1 Thessalonians 2:1-8. Psalm 139:1-3,4-6. Matthew 23:23-26	(St Louis or St Joseph of Calasanz)
Wed 26th	1 Thessalonians 2:9-13. Psalm 139:7-12. Matthew 23:27-32	(Blessed Dominic Barberi)
Thu 27th	1 Thessalonians 3:7-13. Psalm 90:3-5,12-14,17. Matthew 24:42-51	St Monica
Fri 28th	1 Thessalonians 4:1-8. Psalm 97:1-2,5-6,10-12. Matthew 25:1-13	St Augustine of Hippo <i>abstinence</i>
Sat 29th	Jeremiah 1:17-19. Psalm 71. Mark 6: 17-29	Beheading of St John the Baptist
Sun 30th	Deuteronomy 4:1-2,6-8. Psalm 14:2-5. James 1:17-18,21-22,27. Mark 7:1-8, 14-15,21-23.	22nd SUNDAY of YEAR
Mon 31st 1	1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. Psalm 96:1,3-5,11-13. Luke 4:16-30	
Tue 1st Sept	1 Thessalonians 5:1-6,9-11. Psalm 27:1,4,13-14. Luke 4:31-37	(St Giles)
Wed 2nd	Colossians 1:1-8. Psalm 52:10-11. Luke 4:38-44	
Thu 3rd	Colossians 1:9-14. Psalm 98:2-6. Luke 5:1-11	St Gregory the Great
Fri 4th	Colossians 1:15-20. Psalm 100:1-5. Luke 5:33-39	<i>abstinence</i>
Sat 5th	Colossians 1:21-23. Psalm 54:3-4,6,8. Luke 6:1-5	(Blessed Teresa of Calcutta or of the BVM)
Sun 6th	Isaiah 35:4-7. Psalm 146:7-10. James 2:1-5. Mark 7:31-37	23rd SUNDAY of YEAR
Mon 7th	Colossians 1:24 - 2:3. Psalm 62:607,9. Luke 6:6-11	
Tue 8th	Micah 5:1-4 or Romans 8:28-30. Psalm 13;6. Matthew 1:1-16,18-23	BIRTH of the BVM
Wed 9th	Colossians 3:1-11. Psalm 145:2-3,10-13. Luke 6:20-26	(St Peter Claver)
Thu 10th	Colossians 3:12-17. Psalm 150:1-6. Luke 6:27-38	
Fri 11th	1 Timothy 1:1-2,12-14. Psalm 16:1-2,5,7-8,11. Luke 6:39-42	<i>abstinence</i>
Sat 12th	1 Timothy 1:15-17. Psalm 113:1-7. Luke 6:43-49	
	for Name of Mary: Galatians 4:4-7 or Ephesians 1:3-6.12. Psalm ? Luke 1:39-47	(The Holy Name of Mary)
Sun 13th	Isaiah 50:5-9. Psalm 116:1-6,8-9. James 2:14-18. Mark 8:27-35	24th SUNDAY of YEAR
Mon 14th	Numbers 21:4-9. Psalm 78:1-2,34-38. Philippians 2:6-11. John 3:13-17	EXALTATION of the HOLY CROSS
Tue 15th	Hebrews 5:7-9. Psalm 31?. John 19:25-27 or Luke 2:33-35	Our Lady of Sorrows
Wed 16th	1 Timothy 3:14-16. Psalm 111:1-6. Luke 7:31-35	St Cornelius & St Cyprian
Thu 17th	1 Timothy 4:12-16. Psalm 111:7-10. Luke 7:36-50	(St Robert Bellarmine or St Hildegard)
Fri 18th	1 Timothy 6:2-12. Psalm 49:6-10,17-20. Luke 8:1-3	<i>abstinence</i>
Sat 19th	1 Timothy 6: 13-16. Psalm 100:1-5. Luke 8:4-15	(St Januarius or St Theodore or of the BVM)
Sun 20th	Wisdom 2:12,17-20. Psalm 54:3-8. James 3:16 - 4:3. Mark 9:30-37	25th SUNDAY of YEAR
Mon 21st	Ephesians 4:1-7,11-13. Psalm 19:2-5. Matthew 9:9-13	St MATTHEW
Tue 22nd	Ezra 6:7-8,12,14-20. Psalm 122:1-5. Luke 8:19-21	
Wed 23rd	Ezra 9:5-9. Psalm Tobit 3-4,7-8. Luke 9:1-6	St Pius of Pietrelcina (<i>Padre Pio</i>)
Thu 24th	Haggai 1:1-8. Psalm 149:1-6,9. Luke 9:7-9	
Fri 25th	Haggai 2:9. Psalm 43:1-4. Luke 9:18-22	(St Sergei of Radonezh) <i>abstinence</i>
Sat 26th	Zechariah 2:5-9. Psalm Jeremiah 31:10-13. Luke 9:43-45	(St Cosmas & St Damien or of the BVM)
Sun 27th	Numbers 11:25-29. Psalm 19:8,10,12-14. James 5:1-6. Mark 9:38-43,45,47-48	26th SUNDAY of YEAR
Mon 28th	Zechariah 8:1-8. Psalm 102:16-21,29?) Luke 9:56-50	(St Wenceslas or St Laurence Ruiz)
Tue 29th	Daniel 7:9-10,13-14 or Revelation 12:7-12. Psalm 138:1-5. John 1:47-51	St MICHAEL, St GABRIEL & St RAPHAEL
Wed 30th	Nehemiah 2:1-8. Psalm 137:1-6. Luke 9:57-62	St Jerome

Some weekday celebrations in August & September

During these two months we commemorate three of the four great Fathers of the Latin Church: Augustine (28th August), Gregory the Great (3rd September) and Jerome (30th September)



Tuesday 4th August: St John Vianney (*Curé d'Ars*)

JEAN-BAPTISTE Marie Vianney was born near Lyons in France in 1786. In 1815, after various set-backs, he was ordained priest, and in 1818 became parish priest of Ars, a village not far from Lyons. He founded an orphanage for destitute girls. His instructions in the catechism became so popular that he began giving them to crowds in the church. His chief work was in the confessional. He had not been long at Ars when people began coming to him from other parishes, then from distant places, then from all parts of France, and finally from other countries. He spent 16 to 18 hours a day in the confessional. By 1855 the number of pilgrims had reached 20,000 a year.

Jean-Baptiste died at the age of 74. In 1874 he was proclaimed Venerable by Pope Pius IX. In 1905 he was enrolled among the Blessed, and Pope Pius X proposed him as a model for the

parochial clergy. He was canonised in May 1925 by Pope Pius XI.

St John is also known as the *Curé d'Ars* (Parish Priest of Ars). The out-station church at Bulock is dedicated to him.

Saturday 8th August: St Dominic *religious*

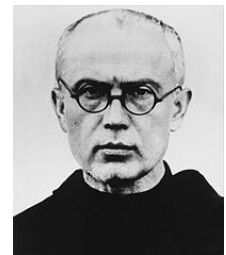
DOMINIC was a Spaniard, born in 1170 in Castille. In 1196 he joined a religious community. On a visit to southern France he gathered a group of preachers (Dominicans) to travel barefoot and in poverty. In 1206 he founded a convent of sisters converted from heresy. He became a friend of St Francis of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

Monday 10th August: St Laurence *martyr*

LAURENCE was a deacon in Rome during the 3rd-century papacy of Sixtus II. When the Pope was executed during the Emperor Valerian's persecution of Christians, Laurence was asked to surrender the church's treasure to the State. Instead, he distributed the money to the poor, for which he was condemned to death. Tradition says that he was roasted to death, and that his fearless behaviour at his execution led to many conversions.

Friday 14th August: St Maximilian Kolbe *martyr*

MAXIMILIAN Kolbe (born 1894) was a Polish Franciscan priest. Ordained in 1918, he founded the City of Mary Immaculate religious centre in 1927, and became its superior as well as director of Poland's chief Catholic publishing house. Fr Kolbe was arrested by the Nazi Gestapo in 1939 and again in 1941 on charges of helping Jews and the Polish underground resistance movement. He was imprisoned at Warsaw, then transferred to the extermination camp at Auschwitz. When a fellow inmate was condemned to death in reprisal for another prisoner's escape, Fr Kolbe volunteered to take the condemned man's place.



Thursday 27th August: St Monica *matron*

Friday 28th: St Augustine of Hippo *doctor*

MONICA, a 5th-century saint, is regarded as a model wife and mother. She devoted her life to her son Augustine, guiding him towards his conversion, as related in Augustine's *Confessione* (autobiography). Monica died on her way home to north Africa a few days after her son had been baptised by St Ambrose.

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

Friday 21st August: St Pius X *Pope*



PIUS X was born Guiseppe Sarto in Lombardy, Italy, the second of 10 children of the village postman. After a poverty-stricken childhood he was granted a seminary scholarship, and was ordained in 1858. He helped the sick during a cholera plague and brought religious instruction to children who had no opportunity to attend Catholic schools. In 1884 Pope Leo XIII appointed him Bishop of Mantua, and in 1893 made him Patriarch of Venice. The Patriarch avoided political involvement, devoting himself to social work. After Leo's death in 1903, Patriarch Sarto was elected Pope and took the name Pius X. His pontificate was notable for his opposition to 'modernism'. But in other ways he was a reformer. He reformed the Curia, established seminaries, reformed the liturgy and Church law, simplified the breviary, and promoted a return to Gregorian chant. He declared that daily Communion was 'the shortest and safest way to heaven', and urged frequent recourse to Confession. He died in August 1914 and was beatified by Pius XII in 1952 and canonised in 1954.

Thursday 3rd September: St Gregory the Great *Pope & doctor*

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

Saturday 5th September: Blessed Teresa of Calcutta *religious*

TERESA (born in Albania in 1910) founded the Missionaries of Charity in Calcutta in 1950. For over 45 years she ministered to the poor, sick, orphaned and dying while guiding the Missionaries of Charity's expansion, first throughout India and then in other countries. By the 1970s she was internationally famed as an advocate for the poor and helpless. In 1979 she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, and in 1980 India's highest civilian honour, the *Bharat Ratna*. At the time of her death in 1997, Teresa's sisters were operating 610 missions in 123 countries, including hospices for people with HIV/Aids, leprosy and tuberculosis, soup kitchens, counselling programmes, orphanages and schools. Following her death, Mother Teresa was beatified by Pope John Paul II.



The Missionaries of Charity have worked in The Gambia since 1994, and today we pray for their work in this country and throughout the world. We pray also for the people of Mariamakunda, where an out-station church is named in Blessed Teresa's honour. *Death of Blessed Teresa's successor, page 20*

Wednesday 23rd September: St Pius of Pietrelcina (*Padre Pio*)

PIO was born in southern Italy in 1887. Until he was 10 he worked on his father's farm, attending Mass and saying the rosary daily. His father went to the USA to pay for Pio to be tutored and enter the Capuchin Order. He was ordained in 1910. After the First World War, Pio became the spiritual director at the mountain friary where he spent the rest of his life. He suffered poor health, and believed that the love of God was inseparable from suffering. He received the stigmata - the five wounds of Christ. Many pilgrims visited Pio. He spent 19 hours a day saying Mass, hearing confessions, and writing. Some higher clergy brought accusations against him, and he was forbidden to preach, and for a time not allowed to say Mass publicly. By 1934 these restrictions were lifted. He died in September 1968. His funeral was attended by over 100,000 mourners. In 2002 he was canonised by St John Paul II, who as a young priest had visited Pio in 1947.

Wednesday 30th September: St Jerome *doctor*

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

*Was not Abraham found faithful when tested, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness?
1 Maccabees 2:52*

God's friend

2 Chronicles 2:27

ON or about Wednesday 23rd September, Muslims will celebrate the annual *Eid-el-Adha*, known to Gambians and other West Africans as *Tobaski*.

This celebration resonates particularly with Christians, because it recalls the readiness of the Patriarch Abraham to sacrifice his son to the Almighty, if that was God's will; and God's rewarding Abraham's faith and obedience by providing an animal for sacrifice.

This inspirational event is narrated in the Hebrew Scriptures (the Old Testament) in Genesis 22:1-19, and related in a remarkably parallel manner in the Qur'an.

Thus Abraham is revered by Jews, Christians and Muslims. To Jews he is a model of virtue, in Christianity the father of all believers, and in Islam an ancestor, as a prophet, of Mohammed.

Mary, mother of Jesus, in giving thanks in the *Magnificat*, recalls God's covenant with Abraham (Luke 2:54-55).

St Paul calls Abraham 'the father of us all' (Romans 4:16).

The Roman Canon (the First Eucharist Prayer) refers to Abraham as *Patriarchae nostri* (our father in faith).

Faith in God and submission to his will are virtues sought by all believers in the One Creator, and thus *Tobaski* is a day for rejoicing.

*My brothers, you descendants of Abraham's family,
and others who fear God, to us the message
of this salvation has been sent' (Acts 13:26)*



End
Piece

Alive, growing and confident

Fr ALEXANDER LUCIE-SMITH says that Africa is where Vatican II has really worked

The following article recently appeared in a Catholic magazine. Readers in The Gambia may wish to ask themselves how far it reflects their experience in our own local Church.



A FULLY-involved laity, a Church which is permanently in mission; and beautiful singing: the Church in Africa is thriving.

It is good to know that the number of Catholics in Africa continues to grow.

Of course, this is not news as such, but rather the confirmation of an historic trend.

Anyone who has lived and worked in Africa, as I have, will be able to confirm the statistical evidence, as one's experience of the particular Church is that of a community that is alive, growing and confident in its faith and mission.

Congregational involvement

If anyone wants to get the flavour of the Catholicism of the future, Africa may be the place to look. For it is here that we see some of the dreams of Vatican II realised. These include a fully-involved laity, a Church that is permanently in mission, as opposed to concerned with maintaining structures, liturgical life that fully reflects and involves its congregations, and, perhaps most important of all, a Church that listens with loving obedience to its pastors and the *Magisterium* of the Church.

Take one small example: in Africa, unlike in Europe, you get congregations that actually want to sing in church. This desire to sing may seem a small thing, but it is indicative of a sort of congregational involvement in the liturgy of which most European parish priests can only dream.

Inculturation

What about theology? Is Africa leading the way in this field as well? There are signs that in a few generations it may be.

It is commonplace to point out that the Catholic Church does not lack great African theologians such as Augustine and Tertullian and Cyprian. But more to the point is the emerging generation of African theologians such as Benezet Bujo.



Fr Benezet Bujo
Author of 'Foundations of an African Ethic'

The main emphasis of Fr Bujo's work is on inculturation (sometimes called 'indigenisation'): that is to say, the process whereby Catholic belief speaks to people within their culture, rather than being perceived as coming to them from outside it.

This inculturation is in large measure responsible for the ongoing success of Catholicism in Africa.

Faith completes the various cultures of Africa, and brings them to perfection. It does not replace them.

Inculturation was the main reason why the mission to the New World in the sixteenth century was so successful; the lack of it is reflected in the relative failure of Catholicism to take root in Japan.

Caveats

Of course there are caveats, too, about the progress of Catholicism in Africa. There are many cultural practices incompatible with Christianity that persist, such as female genital mutilation and various superstitious practices.

... As the Synod on the Family approaches, one has the hope that the African bishops, representing one of the most lively parts of the Universal Church, will make their voices heard. They will have much to say about family life, and they should be listened to with grave attention, particular by those bishops who come from lands where the Church is decaying.

Taken from The Catholic Herald, London

Church growth in Africa



A REPORT on 'Global Catholicism Trends & Forecasts' focuses on the number of Catholics throughout the world, and the number of parishes and priests.

Among the findings is that since 1980 the world's Catholic population has grown by 57 per cent - up from 7.83 million to 1.2 billion. This growth varies greatly by region. Europeans are shedding their historic Catholic identity, while Catholic numbers in Africa and Asia are booming.

Europe saw only a 6 per cent increase, from 271 million to nearly 284 million. But growth in Africa was 238 per cent, as the number of Catholics climbed from 58.6 million in 1980 to 198 million in 2012. The Church in Africa more than doubled in the number of priests between 1980 and 2012, going from 17,346 priests to 40,133.

The report was issued in June by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, Georgetown University USA.



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‘Be opened’

Jesus returned from the region of Tyre, and went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they begged him to lay his hand on him.

He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. Then, looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, ‘*Ephphatha*’ - that is, ‘Be opened.’ And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue released, and he spoke plainly.

Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one; but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. They were astounded beyond measure, saying, ‘He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak.’

Mark 7:31-37. Gospel for 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, 6th September

Our illustration is taken from a painting by El Greco (1541-1614), renowned artist of the Spanish Renaissance