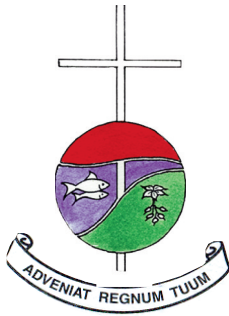




Looking forward to the 60th birthday of our Diocese



The Diocese of Banjul NEWSLETTER

Incorporating The Catholic Newsletter

**God's
supreme
love**

**- from agony to
Resurrection**



**Sister Mary's
silver jubilee**

**Thoughts, prayers & readings
for Mass in Holy Week & Easter
and every Sunday**





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2. Bakoteh	6868816	21. Kaw Junction L/Kunda	6868861
3. Barra, North Bank Region	6868858	22. Kololi Hlghway	6868832
4. Banjul Leman 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
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9. Brikama Hawla Kunda	6868810	28. Sanyang	6868824
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14. Churchill's Town	6868817	33. Sukuta	6868856
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16. Dippakunda	6868812	35. Tallinding	6868809
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19. Kanifing Estate	6868842		



By way of introduction

His death brings life



DEATH is something we rarely care to think about. In conversation, we try as much as we can to avoid talking about it.

There are many books about life, but few about death. I remember that as a boy, if we came home from Sunday Mass singing funeral hymns, we were told to stop immediately. It was bad omen. When Paul wrote to the Philippians (2:8), he said that Christ had accepted death, death on a cross - but after three days had destroyed death and restored life.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ restored hope to the hopeless lives of the disciples. Having left family, friends and sources of livelihood behind, their hope was totally in Jesus, whom they had vowed to follow for the rest of their lives. But after two and a half years the disciples' hopes were dashed. The man to whom they'd given their lives was arrested, tortured and put to death. All seemed a waste of time. They had sacrificed so much, only to realise that everything was over. They were on the verge of going back to their former lives, when some women came to tell them that he was alive.

Christ's death and resurrection fulfilled his promise of eternal life for those who believe in him. He had sacrificed

his heavenly glory to come down to this world with the mission of saving man from sin.

Through his death and resurrection, Christ defeated Satan, which shows that, in this world, no one is superior to God's love. Through his sufferings, Christ has redeemed us from sin.

Although God has promised us salvation, we can only be redeemed through repentance. We cannot enjoy eternal life unless we follow God's ways. God wants us, as his people, to obey his rules so that we shall be saved.

Repentance is the only way for mankind to attain salvation. Christ told his disciples and his followers to repent and be baptised, because this was the only way for them to attain to heaven.

Jesus' resurrection that Sunday morning is proof that God won't let death win. The thing that destroys every human life - the one thing over which we are completely helpless, the most feared and dreaded event in life - Jesus has overcome. Because he was the Son of God, his resurrection embodied the promise that everyone who accepts him can live forever.

'For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.' (1 Corinthians 15:22).

Fr Peter S. Lopez

Does the Church have any advice about elections?

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A 'bitter Lent' in Syria

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First published Palm Sunday 1976

THE DIOCESE OF BANJUL NEWSLETTER

Incorporating The Catholic Newsletter

APRIL/ MAY 2017 Volume 41 No. 2

Published by The Gambia Pastoral Institute

33 Kairaba Avenue

PMB 296 Serrekunda, The Gambia, West Africa

Telephone 4394847 Email info@gpi.gm

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Production *Henry Gomez, Frédéric Diatta*

Here & there

NEWS FROM AROUND THE DIOCESE

'Key stakeholders' to attend first diocesan AGM

THE DIOCESAN Finance Committee's Annual General Meeting (AGM), due to be held at the Gambia Pastoral Institute in early February, has been postponed to Thursday 27th - Saturday 29th April.

It will be the first such meeting to be held in the Diocese of Banjul.

A statement issued by Bishop Robert Ellison and the Chairman of the finance committee, Bernard Mendy, says that the committee has produced mechanisms to prepare accounts and the running of the diocese in a more professional manner, and in line with Canon Law.

An external audit firm, Keita Associates, prepared the first diocesan audit reports and accounts for the year ended 2013, approved by the finance committee on 15th December.

The committee has invited various 'key stakeholders' to the AGM. They are expected to participate 'actively and constructively... as we strive together to realise our diocesan vision to become a vibrant and self-sufficient local church'.

Participants at the AGM will discuss their performance, the challenges they face, and 'how the Bishop's Office could better partner' with them.



Sister Mary's silver jubilee

AT a joyful Mass in Star of the Sea Church, Bakau on Monday 27th February, Sister Mary Potin gave thanks for 25 years as a Sister of the Presentation of Mary.

The principal celebrant was Fr Benedict Mba.

Bishop Ellison was among those who attended the reception that followed at Shalom Retreat Centre Fajara.

'All for God, all through his holy love!'

The Presentation Sisters began their work of prayer and service in Senegal in 1951. In October 1968, with the arrival of Sr Cecilia and Sr Margaret, they began serving in The Gambia. In September 1979 the first Gambian vocation to the Presentation Sisters, Sr Madelaine Mendy, took her final vows.

In 2006 the Sisters in this country were reconstituted as a mission linked to the Generalate in Rome, having before been attached to the Region of Senegal.

Twenty-six Sisters are now working in four missions – at Serrekunda, Fajara, Banjul and Brikama.

The formation house is in Fajara.

The Congregation to which they belong (now active in 18 countries) was founded in France in 1796.



The founder was a French woman, Marie Rivier. She had a burning desire to make Jesus Christ known and loved.

The Sisters are called to live in a spirit of adoration and self-oblation, following the example of Mary, Mother of Jesus, who presented herself in the Temple. They participate in the teaching mission of the Church through the education of children and young people, with particular attention to the least-favoured. They teach at nursery, primary, secondary and vocational levels. They are engaged in teaching the catechism, retreats, spiritual direction and counselling. The Sisters also care for the sick.

Sierra Leone and Gambian bishops confer

THE CATHOLIC Bishops' Conference of Sierra Leone and The Gambia held their annual meeting from Monday 27th February to Saturday 4th March at GPI.

The bishops were joined for two days Monday by the Papal Nuncio to Liberia, Sierra Leone and The Gambia, Archbishop Miroslaw Adamczyk. His duties include attending the meetings of the local bishops' conference, announcing the appointment of a bishop, and serving as the Pope's representative at the installation of a new bishop.

The title 'nuncio' (in Italian, *nunzio*) derives from a Latin word, *nuntius*, which means 'messenger'.

A nuncio represents the Catholic Church in the country or countries to which he is assigned, and serves as a mediator between the local Catholic Church and the Vatican.

Our Nuncio

Miroslaw Adamczyk was born in Gdansk, Poland, in July 1962. He was ordained priest in May 1987, and since entering the diplomatic service of the Holy See in 1993 has served in the nunciatures of Madagascar, India, Hungary, Belgium, South Africa and Venezuela.

Gambian ties with the Vatican

The Gambia established diplomatic relations with the Holy See in 1979

The first Gambian ambassador to the Holy See was Alhaji Ousman Semega Janneh, and the first Papal Nuncio to The Gambia was Archbishop Yohannes Dyba, who presented his credentials to President Sir Dawda Jawara on 29th February 1980.

Archbishop Adamczyk presented his own letters of credence to President Yahya Jammeh in November 2013.

Irish teachers here to help

HELP with the training of teachers in Catholic schools is undertaken each year by a group of retired Irish teachers and school heads. They are members of Gambia-Irish Volunteers in Education (GIVE).

This year's volunteers arrived on 24th February. On Saturday 18th March they held a management workshop at the Catholic Education Secretariat. They return to Ireland on Friday 31st March.

The team leader, Sean Lyons, was interviewed for Kaadu Dunda-Gi on GRTS on Sunday 26th March. On St Patrick's Day, Friday 17th March, the volunteers were among those who took part in the annual Irish evening party at Kololi.

Valentine's Day help for needy youngsters

FOODSTUFFS and clothing were donated to needy children across Greater Banjul on 14th February, St Valentine's Day, by members of the GPI's Catholic Evangelisation Group, led by Augustina Ugbana. The various centres the group visited included GOVI (Gambia Organisation for the Visually Impaired), St John's School for the Deaf, and the Missionary Sisters of Charity at Bakoteh.

'Key stakeholders' to attend first diocesan AGM

THE DIOCESAN Finance Committee's Annual General Meeting (AGM), due to be held at the Gambia Pastoral Institute on 3rd and 4th February, has been postponed to Thursday - Saturday 27th-29th April.

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Participants at the AGM will discuss their performance, the challenges they face, and 'how the Bishop's Office could better partner' with them.

Forthcoming Christian thanksgiving at the stadium



NATIONAL Prayers of Thanksgiving involving Christians of all denominations are to be held at the Independence Stadium Bakau on Saturday 25th March, from 4 to 7 pm.

For Catholics and Anglicans, the day is the feast of the Annunciation. The event is a follow-up to prayers at the stadium on Saturday 19th October (*pictured above*) when Christians of all denominations came together to pray for the recognition of rights, security, peace and religious freedom in The Gambia.

Musical appreciation

Every Saturday from 9am, a group of music-lovers assembles at GPI, where they are tutored by Gaston Gomis of Dakar, well-known by church choirs in The Gambia for his devotional compositions.

Pilgrimage to Kunkujang Mariama



PILGRIMS filled the Shrine Church of our Lady Queen of Peace on the second Saturday of Lent, 11th March, for the annual Pilgrimage of Reconciliation.

Led by Bishop Ellison, the rites included a reading from the Gospel, the renewal of baptismal vows, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Stations of the Cross, and the hearing of individual confessions.

The bishop spoke of the significance of the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32). *See page 8.*

He mentioned that the hostel at Kunkujang Mariama, with dormitories for men and women and a cafeteria, has been completed, and said that donations of crockery and other items would be appreciated.

The area around the shrine has been grassed, reducing dust. The work, together with fencing, has been undertaken by the Organisation of Catholic Men for Development (OCMD).

Pictured above are pilgrims at last year's Lent pilgrimage.

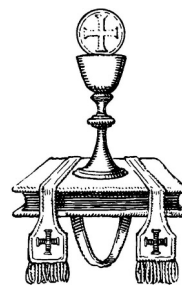
'We are God's family'

THE REVD Gabriel Allen of the Methodist Mission on Wednesday 8th March gave a lecture at St Kizito's Bakoteh. His theme was, 'We are God's family, called to serve, and called to reconciliation.'

The lecture was organised by St Kizito's Jubilee Social Celebrations Committee, whose chairman is Philip Saine.

Congratulations

14th May, Fifth Sunday of Easter, is the 11th Anniversary of the Episcopal Ordination in 2006 of the Right Reverend Robert Ellison CSSp Bishop of Banjul

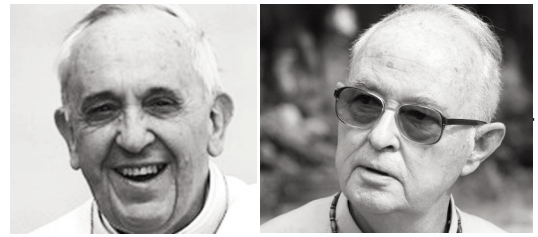


Priests' anniversaries in April

Monday 10th April	Fr Joseph Karbo (1999)
	Fr Michael Ndecky (1999)
Wednesday 12th April	Fr Edward Gomez (1986)
Thursday 13th April	Fr Anthony Gabisi (1985)
	Fr Peter Gomez (1985)
Wednesday 26th April	Fr David Jimoh Jarju (1986)



LENT LETTERS FROM DAMASCUS, ROME AND BANJUL



A bitter Lent: silent looks and streams of tears

The Lent Message of the Maronite Archbishop of Damascus, **SAMIR NASSER**



An apocalyptic scene

IN six years of war the face of Syria has changed quite a lot. It is a huge disaster zone of debris, carbonised buildings, burnt-down houses, ghost neighbourhoods and towns destroyed to the ground. More than twelve millions Syrians -50 per cent of the population - are lacking a roof.

They form the largest mass of refugees since the Second World War. Several millions have left the country in search of more merciful skies. Many are waiting for mercy in camps of misery, some have drowned attempting to leave, and others are in line at embassies, nomads in search of a welcoming land. How can they leave this Syria of torments?

A shattered family

The family, which fortifies Church and nation, and has saved the country in the past, is heavily shaken.

Seldom is a complete family found. Violence has scattered this basic cell of society. Some family members are in graves, others in exile, in prison or on the battlefield. This painful situation is the cause of depression and anxiety and forces those few left without support to beg.

Young engaged couples, separated by this exodus, the immigration of their partner or military mobilisation, cannot marry. Crisis surrounds them. A hope for their future has crumbled. How is it possible to follow course without a family or with a broken family?

A sacrificed childhood

The children are the most fragile. They have paid a great price for this merciless violence. According to Unesco, more than three million Syrian children haven't attended school because they have to give priority to their physical well-being. Those who have been to school witness the demise of the quality of teaching due to fewer teachers and pupils in remaining schools. These overwhelming circumstances impose academic failure.

The centres of psychological support cannot overcome the number and depth of wounds and psychic blocks. How do we restore the spirit of these children destroyed by violence and barbaric scenes?

Threatened parishes

Parishes have seen the number of parishioners diminish and pastoral activities reduced considerably.

The priests are deprived of the means to provide human and spiritual support. The Church of Damascus has witnessed the departure of one third of their clergy - 27 priests. This is a hard blow, weakening the place and role of the Christian minority already in decline.

The priests struggling to remain without any reassurances consider negotiating their eventual departure. They only wait for humanitarian agencies to arrive to assist broken families. How do we fix this alarming haemorrhage?

Can we imagine a Church without priests?

Between pain and freedom

The Syrian people are no longer looking for liberty. Their daily combat is finding bread, water, petrol and fuel, which are harder and harder to find. Electrical shortages have become more frequent and lengthy. These darken nights and reduce any social life.

The search for lost brothers, parents and friends is a very discreet, anxious and hopeful undertaking.

Finding a little room for shelter in a country in ruins has become an impossible dream for families and even more for young engaged couples.

Fighting for liberty or searching for bread, what course should one take?

This little Syrian population lives this reality with pain visible in silent looks and streams of tears.

This bitter Lent of 2017 offers us time in the desert to take a good look at our commitment to the Church in the midst of the faithful in distress, to lead the way towards Christ Resurrected.

Christ, Light of the World, who knows the hearts of men and women, says, 'Come to me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.' (Matthew 11:28)

THE MARONITE Church is in communion with the Pope. The Maronites trace their origins to St Maron, a Syrian hermit of the late 4th and early 5th centuries.

The spiritual head of the Maronite Church after the Pope is the Patriarch of Antioch. The Church retains the ancient West Syrian liturgy. Contact with Rome has been cordial, but it was not until after the Second Vatican Council that the Maronites were freed of papal efforts to Latinise their rite.

In Lebanon, the Maronites constitute one of the two major religious groups, and the President of Lebanon is always Maronite.

Some years ago, at a School Mass in St Augustine's High School, a Maronite Mass was said according to Maronite rites

The favourable season for renewing our encounter with Christ

The message of Pope FRANCIS for Lent 2017

WITHOUT making room for God's word in their heart, people will never be able to welcome and love all human life, Pope Francis has said. 'Each life that we encounter is a gift deserving acceptance, respect and love,' the Pope wrote in his message for Lent. 'The word of God helps us to open our eyes to welcome and love life, especially when it is weak and vulnerable.'

The Pope's message focused on the parable of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31.

The parable calls for sincere conversion, the Pope said, and it 'provides a key to understanding what we need to do in order to attain true happiness and eternal life'.

In the Gospel account, Lazarus and his suffering are described in great detail. While he was 'practically invisible to the rich man', the Gospel gives him a name and a face, upholding him as worthy, as 'a gift, a priceless treasure, a human being whom God loves and cares for, despite his concrete condition as an outcast'. The parable shows that 'a right relationship with people consists in gratefully recognising their value... A poor person at the door of the rich is not a nuisance, but a summons to conversion and to change'. But in order to understand how to open one's heart and see the other as gift, a person must see how the word of God operates.

One way to do that, the Pope said, is to be aware of the temptations and traps the rich man fell victim to, derailing his search for true happiness.

Corruption by love of riches

The nameless 'rich man' lived an opulent, ostentatious life, the Pope wrote, and his love of money led to vanity and pride – 'the lowest rung of this moral degradation... The rich man dressed like a king and acted like a god, forgetting that he was merely mortal. 'For those corrupted by love of riches, nothing exists beyond their own ego. Those around them do not come into their line of sight. The result of attachment to money is a sort of blindness. The rich man does not see the poor man who is starving, hurting, lying at his door.'

Love of money, St Paul warned, 'is the root of all evils' (1 Timothy 6:10). The Pope added that it is also 'the main cause of corruption and a source of envy, strife and suspicion... Instead of being an instrument at our service for doing good and showing solidarity towards others, money can chain us and the entire world to a selfish logic that leaves no room for love and hinders peace.'

The rich man's eyes were finally opened after he and Lazarus were dead. Lazarus found comfort in heaven and the rich man found torment in the netherworld, because, as Abraham explains, 'a kind of fairness is restored' in the after-life and 'life's evils are balanced by good.'

The rich man then asked for an extraordinary sign - Lazarus coming back from the dead - to be given to his family members so they would repent and not make the same mistake

The failure to heed God's word

But Abraham told the rich man that the people have plenty of teaching from 'Moses and the prophets. Let them listen to them.' The Pope said that this explains what the real problem was for the rich man and those like him. 'At the root of all his ills was the failure to heed God's word. As a result, he no longer loved God and grew to despise his neighbour.'

The Pope asked that Lent be a time 'for renewing our encounter with Christ, living in his word, in the sacraments and in our neighbour.'

'May the Holy Spirit lead us on a true journey of conversion, so that we can rediscover the gift of God's word, be purified of the sin that blinds us, and serve Christ present in our brothers and sisters in need,' he said, especially by taking part in the various Lenten campaigns sponsored by local churches.



'The rich man does not see the poor man who is starving, hurting, lying at his door'

Calendar from April 2017

Palm Sunday	9th April
Good Friday	14th April
Easter Sunday	16th April
Ascension Day	Thursday 25th May
Pentecost	Sunday 5th June
The Most Holy Trinity	Sunday 11th June
<i>Ordinary Time resumes</i>	<i>Monday 12th June</i>
Corpus Christi	Sunday 18th June
Sacred Heart	Friday 23rd June
Assumption - <i>Sang Marie</i>	Tuesday 15th August
All Saints	Wednesday 1st November
Christ the King	Sunday 26th November
Immaculate Conception	Thursday 8th December
Kunkujang Mariama Pilgrimage	Saturday 10th December

Islamic Calendar (approximate dates)

Ramadan: Saturday 27th May - Sunday 25th June
 Eid-ul-Fitr (*Koriteh*): Monday 26th June
 Eid-ul-Adha (*Tobaski*): Friday 1st September



'Father, forgive them'

**The Lent Letter of Bishop Robert Ellison CSSp
Given as a homily at the Pilgrimage of Reconciliation,
Kunkujang Mariama, Saturday 11th March 2017**

WE find it hard to forgive one another. It's part of our nature - going back to the original sin of Adam and Eve. Our pride has been hurt; and yet, at the same time, we can also be angry with ourselves. I need to prove that I was right and that he was wrong; and yet, I know in my own heart that I was also responsible. However, if my brother does not also accept his share, do I have to forgive him if he refuses?

To be able to forgive is a gift from God. But I must want to be able to forgive. If so, I can set him free as well as myself - both of us from the same prison of resentment.

If I fail, all will develop into malice. Malice is like a cancer which grows and grows until it destroys. My own life, body and soul, becomes a living death - until one day, when I decide to turn myself over to the divine physician (Almighty God) before it is too late.

Only then can I experience that inner peace and freedom that comes from opening the door of my heart to those healing words spoken from the Cross: 'Father, forgive them...'

'Forgive, and you will be forgiven'

Jesus taught his disciples one simple prayer. It includes the petition: '...And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.' In other words, we are obliged to respect these conditions if we want to be forgiven. This condition seems to be 'non-negotiable'! 'Forgive and you will be forgiven'.

Jesus makes it abundantly clear, or even insists, on the importance of forgiveness. He spoke about a servant who owed a lot of money to his master but was unable to repay him. He begged his master to give him time to repay. In fact, the master went further, and forgave him the whole debt, with no conditions attached.

On his way home, the forgiven servant met a fellow servant who owed him a small amount. He grabbed him by the neck and demanded repayment at once. The fellow servant pleaded for time to pay up, but was refused. He was thrown into prison until the debt was paid off. When the master of the house heard about this he was furious, and ordered that the servant he had forgiven be thrown into prison until all his debts were paid.

Jesus leaves us with no doubt about the message of this story: 'And that is how my heavenly Father will deal with each one of you unless you each forgive your brother from your heart' (Matthew 18:23-25).

How often must I forgive my brother?

Jesus' own disciples had to wrestle with this completely new teaching on forgiveness. Remember: they had been brought up in a tradition which demanded 'an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth': you hit me, and I hit you!

One day, Peter ventured to ask Jesus: 'How often do I have to forgive my brother who has offended me?' Peter suggested 'seven times', expecting that this would sound like an extremely generous offer. But Jesus replied: 'No, not seven times; but seventy times seven.'

Jesus was really saying that there are no limits when it comes to forgiving! (Did you ever stop and ask yourself; am I serious when I want to be a true disciple to Jesus?).

A lesson from Northern Ireland

A nasty war between the IRA [the Irish Republican Army] and similar groups in the North of Ireland lasted thirty years. An agreement on both sides took place ultimately on Good Friday 1997. Some time before this, a remarkable incident took place which probably contributed to the cessation of the fighting.

A young girl died in her father's arms after a bomb went off at a public ceremony in Northern Ireland. After the funeral, the father, a Protestant, publicly and whole-heartedly forgave the evil-doers of the crime. He also pleaded that there should be no revenge. He knew that there was no way in which he could get his daughter back.

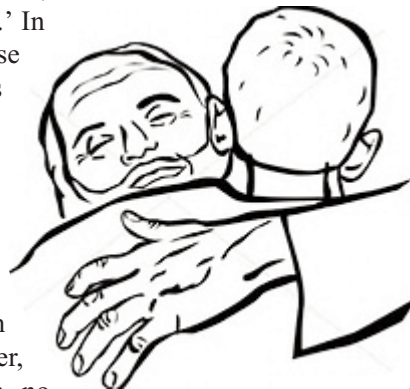
Moreover, revenge could never be a cure. His willingness to forgive touched the whole nation. It was a special moment in the 'Troubles' in Ireland just when the whole nation desperately needed some prescription to calm a violent war and non-stop revenge between two extremist groups. The 'shock' of the father's total forgiveness with no revenge had a widespread impact on both sides of the border - regardless of political, racial or religious beliefs.

This man was truly a man of God. This one single act of perfect Christian witness became a vital turning point in an unending spiral of violence and death that had persecuted and killed the lives of many in this part of Ireland for thirty years. Eventually, it made a significant contribution to the 'Good Friday' agreement in 1997 which marked the beginning of the end of so much violence and death.

Ups and downs in our country

There is an important lesson for us from this true story. We have gone through ups and downs stemming from the elections of 1st December 2016. We went through six weeks of fear and tension. We prayed to God to spare us from bloodshed. He answered our prayers a second time.

Can you imagine what could have happened if the outgoing President had refused to step down? If military intervention had been necessary? It all ended with the magnificent welcome for our new President at his inauguration in the



Stadium on Independence Day. This event put a seal on the troubles that had touched the lives of so many people of our nation, but especially all Christians, going back to 10th December 2015. The witness of our faith, our prayer and trust in God was surely an important factor bringing peace.

And now it is all over - or is it?

Whenever elections take place around the whole world, there are winners and losers. We are no exception; let us not be deceived that all is peace. Barriers can arise leading to a lack of understanding towards the losers. Rumours and wrong information can light a fire. We as Christians are called to address the need to treasure the peace and stability for which we have been known. But before we can begin walking on new ground, we must start among ourselves: forgiveness is the foundation for reconciliation. We must make peace among ourselves at every level, and learn to avoid divisions.

Each one of us struggles between good and evil, between light and darkness. That is why we come to the Shrine of our Lady of Peace: to remind ourselves of the need to recognise our weaknesses. We pray to God to forgive us and to help us forgive each other. Then the example of our lives can bring peace among families, communities and parishes.

Witnessing to peace and justice

This is the witness we are called to give as we try to re-build a nation - partly divided - seeking justice and peace. We never

know when we may find ourselves entangled in a conversation where there are conflicts. Blessed are the peace-makers... This is what the Son of God did for us while hanging on the Cross: 'Father forgive them, for they know not what they do'.

Following Sunday 22nd January I met many who greeted me with, 'Happy New Year'. Then, a little later, the greeting became 'the New Gambia'! And a month later, on Independence Day, we had a great opportunity to welcome our new President.

We have entered a 'new era in the history of The Gambia'. We are looking forward to be able to share in rebuilding our nation.

From time to time I hear the word 'reconciliation'. President Barrow has spoken about the need for a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Such a task is a difficult challenge. It is not something only for a committee of experts. We as Christians must try to live truth and reconciliation in our own lives and among all our neighbours, irrespective of religion, race, tribe or politics.

When it comes to elections with tight results in any country, there are those who have won and those who have lost. We have all experienced this. We Gambians are not the only ones who need to address sensitive and hurtful situations as far as possible. The UK and the USA are going through the same task of trying to build up unity and peace in far more complicated conditions that we have to cope with.

This homily has been lightly abridged



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FACILITIES & SERVICES

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Rates per night: Basic Rooms: D400 single, D650 double, D800 triple. Rooms with a/c: D700 single, D900 double. Rooms with fan: D500 single, D650 double. Double room en suite: D1,000.

Printing

Major publications on Risco printing; Photocopying (b/w or colour); Certificates; Posters; Laminating; Funeral Programmes; Wake-keeping Booklets; School needs – and others; adverts for Diocese of Banjul Newsletter

Workshops, Events, Celebrations

Conference Hall; Dining Hall; Hall for Wedding Receptions



Communications Unit

Television and Radio Programmes produced in our studio; Recordings: video and audio for weddings, funerals, all Church programmes. Filming and editing: sound, adverts, major events.

- ▶ Human
- ▶ Open
- ▶ Listening / Learning
- ▶ Inspirational

HOLISTIC

- ▶ Spiritual
- ▶ Teaching / Togetherness
- ▶ Inclusive
- ▶ Christian/Catering for your needs



family circle

Drivers: *Don't lose your cool...*

THERE are more and more cars on our roads, so good driving on everyone's part is more important than ever.

How many times a day do you see a breakdown or accident? We should never drive without care and attention, at all times giving full consideration to other road users.

And we should adapt our driving to the type and condition of the road we're driving on – which may be anything from a dual carriageway to a narrow, dusty, pot-holed track.

Keeping safe

- Try to be understanding if other drivers cause problems. They may be inexperienced, or not know the area well.

- Be patient. Remember that anyone can make a mistake.

- Don't allow yourself to become agitated or involved if someone is behaving badly on the road. Your anger will only make the situation worse. If you become really agitated, pull over and calm down; and don't continue your journey until you feel relaxed.

- Slow down and hold back if a vehicle pulls out into your path at a junction. Allow it to get clear. Don't over-react by driving too close behind it.

- * Don't forget that cyclists and pedestrians are also road users. We should try to anticipate what they may do. Pedestrians, particularly children, may step into the road without seeing an oncoming car.

- * Safe driving needs concentration. Eating and drinking, playing loud music, trying to read a map, tuning a radio, inserting a cassette or CD and arguing with passengers can all distract a driver.

- * The traffic laws exist for everyone's safety, so we should be familiar with them. *The traffic laws are in force whether or not a police officer is around!*

- * Using hand-held mobile telephones while driving is illegal.

- * The law requires that drivers and front-seat passengers must wear seat-belts while on the road.

A word to cyclists

The rules of the road apply to you as much as to motorists. So don't ride on the wrong side of the road, and don't ignore traffic lights!

Bicycles are made for just one person to use: never carry a passenger - not even a small child.

Never hold onto a moving vehicle in front of you.



Oh my poor back...

BACKACHE, as sufferers can testify, can be not only painful, but debilitating - preventing you enjoying your everyday life.

Back pain is very common. But it normally improves within a few weeks or months.

Pain in the lower back (lumbago) is particularly common, although it can be felt anywhere along the spine, from the neck down to the hips.

In most cases the pain isn't caused by anything serious and will usually get better over time.

There are things you can do to help relieve it. But sometimes the pain can last a long time or keep coming back.

Causes of back pain

Often it's not possible to identify the cause of back pain. Doctors call this 'non-specific' back pain.

Sometimes the pain may be a result of an injury such as a sprain or strain, but often it occurs for no apparent reason. It's very rarely caused by anything serious.

Occasionally back pain can be due to a medical condition such as:

- * a slipped (prolapsed) disc - where a disc of cartilage in the spine presses on a nearby nerve

- * sciatica – irritation of the nerve that runs from the pelvis to the feet

These conditions tend to cause additional symptoms such as numbness, weakness or a tingling sensation, and they're treated differently to non-specific back pain.



Stay active

The following tips may help reduce your backache and speed up your recovery:

- Stay as active as possible and try to continue your daily activities – this is one of the most important things you can do, as resting for long periods is likely to make the pain worse.

- Try exercises and stretches for back pain; other activities such as walking, swimming, yoga and pilates may also be helpful

- Take anti-inflammatory painkillers, such as ibuprofen. But check first that the medicine is safe for you to take. Ask a qualified pharmacist if you're not sure.

- Use hot or cold compression packs for short-term relief - or a hot water bottle and a bag of frozen vegetables wrapped in a cloth will work just as well'

- Although it can be difficult, it helps if you stay optimistic and recognise that your pain should get better, as people who manage to stay positive despite their pain tend to recover quicker.

Don't drop litter!
*Help keep your
 neighbourhood
 and the nation clean*



Getting help and advice

Back pain usually gets better on its own within a few weeks or months and you may not need to see a doctor or other healthcare professional.

But it's a good idea to get help if

- the pain doesn't start to improve within a few weeks
- the pain stops you doing your day-to-day activities
- * the pain is severe, or gets worse over time
- you're worried about the pain or are struggling to cope

You can see your doctor, who will ask about your symptoms, examine your back, and discuss possible treatments. The doctor may refer you to a specialist doctor or a physiotherapist.

Treatment by a specialist

Your doctor or physiotherapist may recommend extra treatment if they don't think your pain will improve with self-measures alone.

Such recommendations may include

- * Group exercise classes, where you're taught exercises to strengthen your muscles and improve your posture
- * Manual therapy - treatment such as manipulating the spine and massage.

Some people choose to see a therapist for manual therapy without seeing their doctor first. If you want to do this, you'll need to pay for private treatment. Surgery is generally only considered in the very small number of cases where back pain is caused by a specific medical condition.

Preventing back pain

It's difficult to prevent back pain, but the following tips may help reduce your risk:

- * Do regular back exercises and stretches
- * Stay active – doing regular exercise can help keep your back strong; adults are advised to do 150 minutes of exercise a week
- * Avoid sitting for too long when driving or at work
- * Take care when lifting.

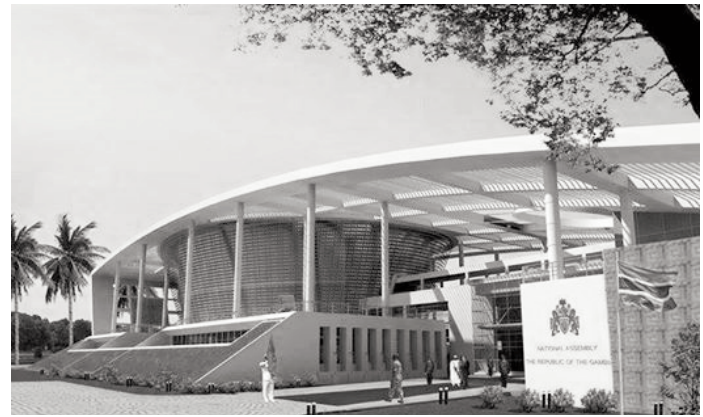
Check your posture when sitting, using computers and watching television – find out how to sit correctly. Regular laptop owners need to take care.

- * Ensure that the mattress on your bed supports you properly
- * Lose weight through a combination of a healthy diet and regular exercise if you're overweight – being overweight can increase your risk of developing back pain.

You should contact your doctor without delay if you have back pain and

- * numbness or tingling around your genitals or buttocks
- * difficulty urinating
- * loss of bladder or bowel control
- * chest pain
- * a high temperature (fever) of 38C (100.4F) or above
- * unexplained weight loss
- * a swelling or a deformity in your back
- * it doesn't improve after resting, or is worse at night, or after a serious accident, such as a car accident

These problems could be a sign of something more serious and need to be checked urgently.



Elections and the Church

THE ELECTION of Members of the National Assembly will take place on Thursday 6th April.

Has the Catholic Church anything to say about taking part in elections?

The Catechism of the Catholic Church says:

‘Submission to authority and co-responsibility for the common good make it morally obligatory to pay taxes, to exercise the right to vote, and to defend one's country’.

Pope Benedict XVI's encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est*, points out: ‘The direct duty to work for a just society is proper to the lay faithful. They cannot relinquish their participation in economic, social, legislative, administrative and cultural areas intended to promote the common good.’

Faced with a form?

*Advice for younger readers
looking for work*

If you're looking for a job, you may be given forms to fill. If you want to be selected for interview, make sure that you fill the form fully, correctly and neatly.



Applicants who present messy forms, disfigured with crossings-out, are rarely asked to an interview.

Read through the whole form carefully. If it's clear that your potential employer is asking for ‘essential’ qualifications or experience that you don't have, it's of little use to apply for the job. (But if you can *almost* supply what he's looking for, it may be worthwhile to apply - perhaps adding a covering note to explain why you think you should be considered.)

To make sure you don't make any mistake on the application form, photocopy the form, and use the photocopy to draft your application. Be sure you understand everything on the form and that you are supplying all the information required clearly and in good handwriting. If you commit mistakes, make a second photocopy and practise on that.

Don't write anything that is vague or untrue. When you're satisfied that you've filled the photocopied form *fully* and *correctly*, fill the actual form. Don't be in a rush.

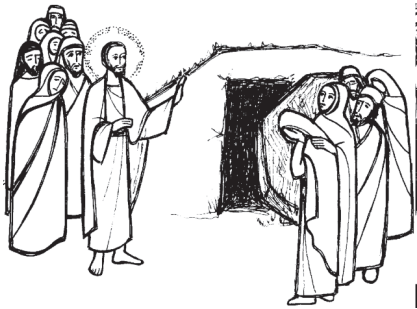
If your application form is among the clearest and neatest that the employer receives, you're well on the way to being considered. Keep the form clean and uncreased. Use a suitable pen, and make sure that your handwriting is clear.

While we're on this subject, remember that you should keep documents relating to your education and work experience safe, clean and uncreased. If you want to show your family and friends what you've achieved, make photocopies.

Per crucem et passionem tuam, libera nos, Dómine

By your cross and passion, set us free, O Lord

Sunday Reflections

Reflections, readings and prayers for the Sundays in April & May
and for Holy Week & the Easter Triduum

2nd April Fifth Sunday of Lent

The colour for Lent is purple. From today until the Easter Vigil it is traditional that crosses and pictures are veiled.

New life for Lazarus – and for us

IN our first reading today, the prophet Ezekiel says that God will raise his people from their graves - because, as the responsorial psalm (Psalm 129) declares: 'with the Lord there is fullness of redemption'.

In the second reading, taken from Romans, Paul assures us, 'If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, then he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also...'

Today's Gospel reading relates one of Jesus' most remarkable miracles. It took place in Bethany, three kilometres from Jerusalem (let's say, about the same distance as Mile Two from Banjul).

Jesus was attached to the family of Lazarus, Martha and Mary, and quite often visited them. When he heard that Lazarus was dead, Jesus 'Jesus wept' – the shortest sentence in the New Testament.

In the Gospels, several women are called Mary. This Mary was later to anoint Jesus' feet at the house of Simon the leper (John 12:1-8).

Unlike the Sadducees (members of the Jewish sect who denied the resurrection), Mary's sister Martha was sure that Lazarus would rise again 'on the last day'. She did not ask Jesus to raise Lazarus then and there, but simply said to him: 'I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.'

May Martha's absolute trust in Jesus be ours. As Jesus told Martha, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live.'

Collect

BY your help, we beseech you, Lord our God, may we walk eagerly in that same charity with which, out of love for the world, your Son handed himself over to the death...

Readings: Ezekiel 37:12-14. Psalm 129. Response: With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption. Romans 8:8-11.

Gospel acclamation: Glory and praise to you, O Christ! I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord: whoever believes in me shall never die.

Gospel: John 11:1-45

Prayer over the Offerings

HEAR us, almighty God, and, having installed in your servants the teachings of the Christian faith, graciously purify them by the working of this sacrifice...

Preface

...For as true man he wept for Lazarus his friend and as eternal God raised him from the tomb, just as, taking pity on the human race, he leads us by sacred mysteries to new life...

Prayer after Communion

WE pray, almighty God, that we may always be counted among the members of Christ, in whose Body and Blood we have communion...

Prayer over the People

BLESS, O Lord, your people, who long for the gift of your mercy, and grant that what, at your prompting, they desire, they may receive by your generous gift...



HOLY WEEK

9th April Palm Sunday

Hosanna to the Son of David

The colour for Palm Sunday is red. The Mass is preceded by the blessing and procession of palms, commemorating Christ's entry into Jerusalem before his Passion.

TODAY we begin Holy Week by greeting Jesus as our King. We recall his entry to Jerusalem on a donkey, hailed by welcoming crowds as the Son of David who was coming in the name of the Lord. As an act of homage to a royal person (2 Kings 9:13) people spread their clothing before him.

Jesus had earlier instructed his disciples to keep quiet about him (Matthew 12:16). But now he told them to proclaim him as the Messiah.

In Jesus' day, Jerusalem was no bigger, probably, than Banjul today. So his arrival, his teaching in the Temple, and his arrest, trial and crucifixion soon became talked about in Jerusalem's streets, markets and homes - and many were 'witnesses to these things'.

This Palm Sunday, our Gospel readings about the events of Holy Week come from the Gospel of St Matthew.

Matthew's account begins with the Passover meal at which Jesus told his disciples that one of them was about to betray him: 'The Son of Man is going to his fate, as Scripture says he will.' Jesus then inaugurated the Holy Eucharist.

At the Mount of Olives, Jesus again quoted Scripture, saying that his disciples would desert him. When Peter objected, Jesus foretold that Peter would deny him three times that very night.

At Gethsemane, Jesus was in deep distress. While the disciples slept, he prayed to his Father, saying that if he had to drink the cup of suffering, he was willing to do so.

Judas Iscariot arrived with armed men and betrayed Jesus with a kiss. Jesus forbade resistance, and allowed himself to be arrested. Matthew's account emphasises, 'Now all this happened to fulfil the prophecies in Scripture.'

We cannot meditate too often on what followed: Jesus' quiet assurance before his accusers (he knew what was to happen to him that night); Peter's denial, which led to his bitter weeping; Judas' suicide; Pilate freeing the brigand Barabbas to placate the mob; the mocking and scourging; Jesus' carrying his cross, helped by Simon of Cyrene; and his crucifixion at Golgotha.

Jesus was given vinegar to drink, watched by women followers 'at a distance'. He died. The earthquake and the opening of the tombs as related by Matthew symbolise the unique, shattering drama of Christ's death.

We stand throughout the reading or singing of the Passion Gospel, as we stand every Sunday at the Gospel during Mass. Because today's Gospel is long, we may feel some discomfort. But what is our trivial discomfort compared with the agony of Jesus Christ? *See End Piece, page 30*

Before the blessing of palms, the priest addresses the people:

DEAR brothers and sisters, since the beginning of Lent until now, we have prepared our hearts by penance and charitable works. Today we have gathered together to herald with the whole Church the beginning of the celebration of the Lord's Paschal Mystery – that is to say, of his Passion and Resurrection. For it was to accomplish this mystery that he entered his own city of Jerusalem.

Therefore, with all faith and devotion, let us commemorate the Lord's entry into the city for our salvation, following his footsteps, so that, being made by his grace partakers of his Cross, we may have a share also in his Resurrection and his life.

After the blessing of palms, Matthew's account of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem (chapter 21:1-11) is proclaimed, followed by the procession, the people singing 'Hosanna to the Son of David' and other suitable hymns.

Collect

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

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

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

Passion Gospel: Matthew 26:14 – 27:66

Prayer over the Offerings

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

Preface

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

Prayer after Communion

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

Prayer over the People

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

10th April

Monday of Holy Week

Collect

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

Readings: Isaiah 42:1-7. Psalm 26:1-3,13-14. John 12:1-11.

Prayer over the Offerings

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

Preface

...for the days of his Saving Passion and Glorious Resurrection are approaching, by which the pride of the ancient foe is vanquished, and the mystery of our redemption in Christ is celebrated...

11th April

Tuesday of Holy Week

Collect

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

Readings: Isaiah 49:1-6. Psalm 70:1-6,15,17. John 13:21-33,35-38.

Prayer over the Offerings

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

Preface: *as yesterday, above (Monday of Holy Week)*



Tuesday evening 12th April at the Cathedral Mass of the Chrism

The colour at this Mass is white.

At the Chrism Mass the clergy of the diocese renew their priestly vows, and the holy oils are consecrated:

- The oil of the catechumens (used before a candidate is baptised)
- The oil of the sick
- The oil of chrism (used at baptisms, ordinations, and the consecration of churches and altars)

Collect

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

Readings: Isaiah 61:1-3,6,8-9. Psalm 88:21-22,25,27.
Response: I will sing for ever of your love, O Lord.
Revelation 1:5-8.

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

Gospel: Luke 4:16-21

After the Bishop's homily, he invites the clergy to renew their priestly vows.

Prayer over the Offerings

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

Preface

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

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

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

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

Prayer after Communion

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

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

12th April

Wednesday of Holy Week

Collect

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

Readings: Isaiah 50:4-9. Psalm 68:8-10,21-22,31,33-34. Matthew 26:14-25.

Prayer over the Offerings

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

Preface: as Monday of Holy Week (previous page)

13th April

Morning of Thursday of Holy Week

No Mass is celebrated this morning.



THE EASTER TRIDUUM

The Church asks priests to take care to instruct the faithful on the meaning and structure of the rites of Holy Thursday, Good Friday and the Easter Vigil, so that they may fruitfully take part in them.

Evening of 13th April

Holy Thursday Mass of the Last Supper

In some places, today is called 'Maundy Thursday'.

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

The priest wears white vestments. While the Gloria in Excelsis is sung, church bells may be rung. (They will not be rung again until the Easter Vigil.)

Collect

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

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

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

Gospel: John 13:1-15

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

Prayer over the Offerings

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

Preface

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

Prayer after Communion

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

After this closing prayer, the Blessed Sacrament is carried in solemn procession to the Altar of Repose. During the procession the hymn Pange Lingua ('Of the glorious Body telling') is sung.

The altar is stripped and crosses removed or covered. The people leave the church in silence.

Devout watch is kept before the Blessed Sacrament until midnight.

14th April

Good Friday

Good Friday is a day of obligatory fasting.

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



Collect

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

An alternative Collect may be used.

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

Gospel acclamation: Glory and praise to you, O Christ! Christ was humbler yet, even accepting death, death on a cross. But God raised him high, giving him the name that is above all names...

Passion Gospel: John 18:1 - 19:42

The Solemn Intercessions

1. For the Holy Church
2. For the Pope
3. For the faithful
4. For catechumens
5. For the unity of Christians
6. For the Jewish people
7. For those who do not believe in Christ

8. For those who do not believe in God
9. For those in public office
10. For those in tribulation

The Adoration of the Cross

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

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

The priest unveils the right arm of the cross, with the same invitation and response. Then he unveils the entire cross, with the invitation and response.

The people come forward and venerate the cross, one by one. During the veneration the singing usually includes 'The Reproaches', ancient chants of rebuke for our unfaithfulness and ingratitude.

After the veneration the cross is placed on the altar, which has been covered with a white cloth. The Blessed Sacrament is carried from the Altar of Repose and placed on the altar. The priest genuflects and begins the Our Father and the usual Communion rite.

Prayer after Communion

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

Prayer over the People

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

15th April

Holy Saturday

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

We are strongly recommended to extend the fast of Good Friday throughout Holy Saturday, while the Church waits, as it were, at the Lord's tomb. In this way, the Easter Vigil will be all the more joyful.

Easter Reminder

* TO remain in good standing in the Church, all Catholics must attend Mass every Sunday and Holyday of Obligation, unless they are genuinely unable to do so.

• ALL Catholics must receive Holy Communion at least once a year, during Easter Time – although they are encouraged to receive Communion more frequently.

• HOLY Communion may only be received at Mass by Catholics who are in a state of grace in respect to attendance at Sunday Mass, and in every basic moral regard.

• IF you are aware of any grave sin you must make Confession before a priest, and receive absolution. Then - and only then - may you receive Holy Communion in faith and with joy.

* NON-CATHOLICS are welcome at every Mass. But they cannot receive Holy Communion, because by their own choice they are not in communion with the Bishop of Banjul, the Pope and the Roman Catholic Church.

THE EASTER VIGIL

THE EASTER VIGIL begins after nightfall on Saturday evening.

It is the very greatest observance of the Christian year, 'the Solemnity of Solemnities', the 'foretaste of the everlasting Easter'.



There are four parts to the Vigil

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

The Service of Light

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

The paschal candle is placed in the sanctuary, and the deacon or priest sings the Exsultet – the ancient Easter proclamation unique to this holy night: '...This is the night when Christ broke the chains of death, and rose triumphant from the grave!'

During the Exsultet the people stand with lighted candles.

The Liturgy of the Word

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

There are seven Old Testament readings, each followed by a responsorial psalm and a prayer.

Some of these readings may be omitted, but the reading from Exodus is always proclaimed.

- 1 Genesis 1:1 0 2;2 God our Creator
- 2 Genesis 22:1-18 Abraham's obedience
- 3 Exodus 14:15 – 15:1 Moses leads his people from Egypt
- 4 Isaiah 54:5-14 God's everlasting love
- 5 Isaiah 55:1-11 God's mercy and forgiveness
- 6 Baruch 3:9-15 & 32 – 4:4 Walking in God's ways
- 7 Ezekiel 36:16-28 We are God's people

Following the Old Testament readings, the altar candles are lit, and the priest intones the Gloria in Excelsis. The church bells may be rung.

Collect

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

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

Gospel: Matthew 28:1-10

The homily, however short, is not to be omitted.

The Liturgy of Baptism

If there are any to be baptised, the Litany of the Saints is sung, and the priest blesses the water in the font.

When the rite of Baptism (and Confirmation) has been completed (or if there is no Baptism, immediately after the blessing of the water) all stand with lighted candles and renew their baptismal promises.

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

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

Prayer over the Offerings

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

Preface

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

Prayer after Communion

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

16th April

Easter Sunday

Witnesses

'WE are witnesses!' cried St Peter, when he and his fellow apostles proclaimed the Good News of the Resurrection to everyone who would listen. As today's reading from Acts relates, the Resurrection and the descent of the Holy Spirit made the little band of apostles new men: eager, articulate, fearless.

As St Paul declares in the second reading, 'Christ is your life.'

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

Christ's resurrection is not just a pious belief. It is not just a doctrine. It is a fact – the most wonderful fact of life that we can know.

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

Let us, like the Lord's first followers, shout for joy and tell all the world!



Collect

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

Readings: Acts 10:34,37-43. Psalm 117:1-2,15-17,22-23. Response: This day was made by the Lord; we rejoice and are glad (or Alleluia). Colossians 3:1-4 or 1 Corinthians 5:6-8.

Sequence: *Victimae paschali*

Christians, to the Paschal Victim offer sacrifice and praise. The sheep are ransomed by the Lamb; and Christ, the undefiled, hath sinners to his Father reconciled. Death with life contended: combat strangely ended! Life's own Champion slain, yet lives to reign. Tell us, Mary: say what thou didst see upon the way, The tomb the Living didst enclose; I saw Christ's glory as he rose! The angels there attesting, shroud with grave-clothes resting, Christ, my hope, has risen: he goes before you into Galilee. That Christ is truly risen from the dead, we know. Victorious King, thy mercy show!

Latin version

Victimae paschali laudes immolent Christiani.

Agnus redemit oves: Christus innocens Patri reconciliavit peccatores.

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

Dic nobis Maria, quid vidisti in via?

Sepulcrum Christi viventis, et gloriam vidi resurgentis:

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

Credendum est magis soli Mariae veraci Quam Judaeorum Turbae fallaci.

Scimus Christum surrexisse a mortuis vere:

tu nobis, victor Rex misere

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

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

Prayer over the Offerings

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

Preface

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

Prayer after Communion

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

3rd April
**Second Sunday
of Easter**

(Divine Mercy Sunday)

Truth for all time

HOW different is our Church in the 21st century from the Church of Peter's day! Peter's Church was so small that 'everything they owned was held in common'. Quite impossible

in our world, when there are well over a billion Catholics. Yet reading how the early Christians looked after each other is a reminder that most of us could do much more for our neighbour. Even more importantly, we need reminding that the message of the Church is the same today as it was for Peter and will be until the end of time. By his resurrection, Christ has set us free!

Many Christians, it seems, don't quite believe it, or don't act on it. Let us seek to meet the risen Christ in prayer and the sacraments, and in everyone we encounter. Then, like Thomas, we shall exclaim, 'My Lord and my God!'

In today's Gospel we're told that Christ greeted the apostles with 'Peace be with you.' He breathed the Holy Spirit on them, conferring the power to forgive sins in his name. That peace and that gift of the Spirit and the sacrament of Penance (Confession) have conferred immeasurable grace on the Church ever since.

Deo gratias!

Collect

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

Readings: Acts 2:42-47. Psalm 117:2-4,13-15,23-24. Response: Alleluia... Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, for his love has no end... 1 Peter 1:3-9.

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

Gospel: John 30:19-31.

Prayer over the Offerings

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

Preface...

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



Prayer after Communion

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



30th April
**Third Sunday
of Easter Time**

*'It is true. The Lord
has risen!'*

ST PETER, in today's first and second readings, stresses the risen Christ's power and glory. Peter told the Jewish crowds that Jesus had been 'raised to the heights by God's right hand'. And in his letter, Peter referred to Christ as a 'lamb without spot or

stain', whom God had 'raised from the dead and given glory'.

May God preserve always in us such a vision of his glory, with the risen Christ and the Holy Spirit.

But glory was not in the minds of the two men in St Luke's Gospel who, after Jesus' horrifying death, were walking to Emmaus, a village about seven miles from Jerusalem, their faces downcast.

Jesus joined them - but they did not recognise him. He responded to their perplexity: did they not understand from the Scriptures that the Christ was bound 'to suffer, and so enter his glory'?

It was when Jesus broke bread with them that the two men realised who he was. He vanished; but with 'their hearts burning within them' they rushed back to Jerusalem and to the disciples, the words tumbling out of them: 'Yes, it's true! The Lord has risen!'

The Church teaches us who Jesus is, but somehow each one of us needs personally to feel the urgency, the thrill and the glory of Christ, the risen Lord. 'Yes, it's true! The Lord has risen!'

Collect

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

Readings: Acts 2:14,22-33. Psalm 15:1-2,5,7-11. Response: Show us, Lord, the path of life (or Alleluia...) 1 Peter 1:17-21.

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

Gospel: Luke 24:13-35

Prayer over the Offerings

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

Preface: the priest may use any one of the five Prefaces provided for Easter Time (see page 23)

Prayer after Communion

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

7th May

**Fourth Sunday
of Easter Time**

'What must we do?'

IN our readings from Acts this Easter Time we sense Peter's urgency as he preaches the Good News of Christ's resurrection.

He transmits this urgency to at least some of his hearers, who cry out, 'What must we do?' Peter enjoins repentance and baptism, leading to the gift of the Holy Spirit. He urges the people: 'Save yourselves.'

Then, in Peter's First Letter (our second reading today), he says we had gone astray like lost sheep, but have now come back to the 'shepherd and guardian' of our souls.

Have we? Do we feel Peter's sense of urgency? Do we regard ourselves as lost sheep? Do we really need a shepherd?

Jesus told people that he was the good shepherd. He was also the gateway to the sheepfold, a refuge of peace and safety. Such images would appeal to the men and women of his day, who were familiar with sheep and shepherds.

Jesus went on to say, 'most solemnly', that he had come 'that they may have life, and have it to the full.'

If we only want comfort from our religion, easy answers, no great demands, we may find Christ's 'most solemn' and most clear and direct words altogether too insistent and challenging. 'I am the gateway,' he says. Shall we enter the gateway - or linger at the threshold, discussing the pros and cons of really following him?

This is Vocations Sunday. We pray for vocations to the priesthood and the religious life. We pray also that each of us may serve Christ faithfully in whatever way he calls us.

Collect

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

Readings: Acts 2:14,36-41. Psalm 22:1-6. Response: The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want (or Alleluia...) 1 Peter 2:20-25.

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

Gospel: John 10:1-10

Prayer over the Offerings

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

Preface: the priest may use any one of the five Prefaces provided for Easter Time (see page 23)

Prayer after Communion

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



14th May
**Fifth Sunday
of Easter Time**

The corner-stone

TODAY'S passage from Peter's First Letter burns with enthusiasm. Peter describes Christ as the living stone, selected by God himself. On this precious stone - the corner-stone - we build our faith. We Christians, says Peter, are 'a royal priesthood... a people set apart to sing the praises of God, who called us out of the darkness into his wonderful light'.

Could there be a greater calling? Whatever our social status, and whatever we have achieved or failed to achieve, is of far less significance than our membership of Christ's Church. We can hold our heads high - but only because of our relationship with Christ. We have not appointed ourselves: it is Christ who has called us.

Jesus said that in his Father's house there were many rooms. Some interpret this to mean that in heaven all manner of souls will enjoy God's favour: people of all religions and none.

But what matters, surely, is what Jesus said next: 'I am the way, the truth and the life: no one comes to the Father except by me.'

The time to accept Jesus as the Way, the Truth and the Life is now, in this life, in this Gambia, whatever our personal circumstances. Then, indeed, our hearts need not be troubled. To see Christ, to recognise him for what he is, is to see the Father and to see eternal life.

Collect

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

Readings: Acts 6:1-7. Psalm 32:1-2,4-5,18-19. Response: May your love be upon us, O Lord, as we place all our hope in you (or Alleluia...) 1 Peter 2:4-9

Gospel acclamation: Alleluia... Jesus said, I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one can come to the Father except through me.

Gospel: John 14:1-12

Prayer over the Offerings

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

Preface: the priest may use any one of the five Prefaces provided for Easter Time (see page 23)

Prayer after Communion

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

*Christ the Lord has risen:
therefore let us keep the feast*



21st May
**Sixth Sunday
of Easter Time**

*'Always have your
answer ready'*

IN today's Gospel reading we hear how Jesus assured his disciples that after his departure he would send them the Holy Spirit, and that he himself would come again.

Under the guidance of that same Holy Spirit, the Church continues as Christ's pilgrim people on earth, awaiting the day when he will come again. In this time of waiting, we encourage others to join us.

For his first followers, St Peter had warm, practical advice, surely as useful in our day as it was in his. 'Reverence the Lord Christ in your hearts, and always have your answer ready for people who ask you the reason for the hope you all have. But give it with courtesy and respect and a clear conscience.'

Collect

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

Readings: Acts 8:5-8,14-17. Psalm 65:1-7,16-20. Response: Cry with joy to the Lord, all the earth (or Alleluia...) 1 Peter 3:15-18

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

Gospel: John 14:15-21

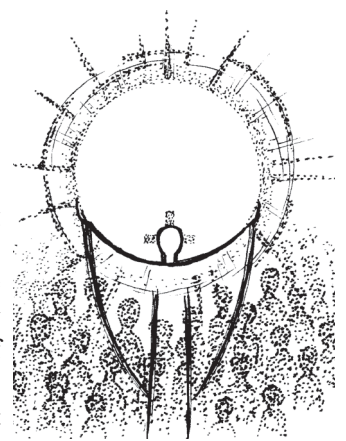
Prayer over the Offerings

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

Preface: the priest may use any one of the five Prefaces provided for Easter Time (see page 23)

Prayer after Communion

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



Lumen Christi

Before the Easter Vigil a 'new fire' is lit outside the church. The priest cuts a cross in the Paschal Candle and the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet - Alpha and Omega - and the current year. He inserts five grains of incense into the candle in the form of a cross to recall the spices with which Christ's body was prepared for the tomb, and the wounds in his hands, feet and side. From the new fire the priest lights the candle, which he carries in procession into the church. The Paschal Candle is lit at principal services throughout Easter Time.





THE ASCENSION of THE LORD

FORTY days after the risen Christ first appeared to his apostles, he spoke of his divine authority, instructed them to 'make disciples of all nations', and was taken from their sight. The Gospels tell us, 'He parted from them.' (Mark 16:19, Luke 24:51).

Ascension Day celebrates Christ's earthly parting and his exaltation to the Right Hand of the Father. The Ascension, like the feast of Christ the King, is a celebration of the Lord in glory.

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

Christ joins earth and heaven. He walks with us now, on earth - if we ask him - in the sacraments and in all aspects of our daily lives. And he is ever-living with the Father to pray for us and to welcome us into his glory.

In the Gospel we have a wonderful assurance: 'Know that I am with you always - yes, to the end of time.'

Wednesday 25th May

Evening Vigil Mass of the Ascension

Collect

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

Readings: *as for Ascension Day, right-hand column*

Prayer over the Offerings

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

Preface

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

The priest may use the alternative Preface for the Ascension: see tomorrow's Mass (opposite column).

Prayer after Communion

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

Thursday 26th May
Ascension Day

Collect

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

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

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

Gospel: Matthew 28:16-20

Prayer over the Offerings

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

Preface

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

The priest may use the alternative Preface for the Ascension: see Vigil Mass, bottom of left-hand column.

Prayer after Communion

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

28th May

Seventh Sunday of Easter Time

THIS Sunday we continue to give thanks for our Lord's Ascension, and look forward to Pentecost, the celebration of the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Church, as Jesus had promised.

Our thanks should be accompanied by prayer that we may be ready always to encounter the Lord. As our example we have Mary and the apostles, who after Christ's Ascension gathered in Jerusalem 'in continuous prayer', as related in today's first reading.

It's a sobering thought that in some parts of the world today the many Christians face alienation and persecution. May St Peter (as in today's second reading) give them hope: '...if any one of you should suffer for being a Christian, then he is not to be ashamed of it; he should thank God that he has been called one.'



We

should give thanks for all the Christ's martyrs, from the earliest days until the present, and in our own easier situation pray that we may be worthy, like them, to join Christ in his glory.

Of that glory Jesus spoke to his apostles before his passion (as related in today's Gospel) and spoke of the eternal life that the Father gives to all who trust in him.

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Collect

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

Readings: Acts 1:12-14. Psalm 26:1,4,7-8. Response: I am sure I shall see the Lord's goodness in the land of the living. 1 Peter 4:13-16.

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

Gospel: John 12:1-11

Prayer over the Offerings

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

Preface: *the priest may use one of the Prefaces of Easter Time (see below) or the Prefaces of the Ascension (see opposite page)*

Prayer after Communion

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

Easter Prefaces

Preface I: see Easter Sunday, page 19

Preface II ...Through him the children of light rise to eternal life, and the halls of the heavenly kingdom are thrown open to the faithful; for his Death is our ransom from death, and in his rising the life of all has risen. Therefore, overcome with paschal joy, every land, every people, exults in your praise...

Preface III ...He never ceases to offer himself for us, but defends us and ever pleads our cause before you: he is the sacrificial Victim who dies no more, the Lamb, once slain, who lives for ever. Therefore, overcome with paschal joy, every land, every people, exults in your praise...

Preface IV...For, with the old order destroyed, a universe cast down is renewed, and integrity of life is restored to us in Christ. Therefore, overcome with paschal joy, every land, every people, exults in your praise...

Preface V ...By the oblation of his Body, he brought the sacrifices of old to fulfilment in the reality of the Cross, and by commending himself to you for our salvation, showed himself the Priest, the Altar, and the Lamb of sacrifice. Therefore, overcome with paschal joy, every land, every people, exults in your praise...



The Editor & Staff of The Diocese of Banjul Newsletter wish all Readers a Devout Holy Week and a joyful Easter



Pious practices

MANY devotional practices in the Church are so habitual that we don't think about them. But whenever we make the sign of the Cross, for instance, or dip our fingers into holy water, we should do so in awareness of what the action means. We shouldn't perform such actions to impress others or to tell ourselves how holy and good we are. We perform them to honour God and our membership of his Church.

The sign of the Cross

THE SIGN of the Cross is made with the right hand from the forehead to the chest, and from the left shoulder across to the right.

We were signed with Christ's Cross at our baptism as a visible reminder to everyone that we belong to Christ and not to ourselves. We make the sign of the Cross because, in St Paul's words, we are 'not ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified'.

From the earliest days of the Church, Christians have made the sign of the Cross as an outward and visible sign of inward and spiritual belief. We 'cross ourselves' at the beginning and end of prayer; when receiving forgiveness or a blessing; on entering and leaving Church; using holy water; and at times of crisis or danger.

At Mass, when the priest has announced the Gospel, we make the sign of the cross with the right thumb on the forehead, the lips, and over the heart. This signifies our prayer that the words of the Gospel will prevail in our mind, on our lips, and in our heart.



OBITUARY

Teacher, principal and sportsman

THE DEATH occurred on Tuesday 21st March of Fr Joseph Gough CSSp, teacher, principal and sportsman, who devoted his time and talents, even after retirement, to The Gambia.

Joseph Anthony Gough was born in Kilkenny, Ireland in 1944 into a family of nine. He grew up working on a farm, where he developed his hard work ethic.

At the age of 13 he enrolled at Rockwell College for his secondary education. He joined the Congregation of the Holy Ghost in 1963 and proceeded to University College Dublin, where he achieved a BA in English.

Following graduation, he taught at Blackrock College, a prestigious boy's school, for two years. He returned to the seminary in 1968 and was ordained priest in 1971.

Fr Gough was appointed to the Gambia and arrived in 1972. His first assignment was to open and direct St Michael's Seminary in Fajara, together with the late Bishop Pierre Sagnia. They recruited and trained the first batch of Gambian seminarians, from whom emerged the first five Gambian priests.

In September 1972 Fr Gough joined the staff of St Augustine's High School, and in 1978 was appointed Principal, taking over from Fr Michael Cleary (later Bishop of Banjul). During his time as Principal, the school song was composed and sung at assemblies, the school became three-stream, and Prize-Giving Day was introduced, becoming a popular public event. In July 1983 Fr Gough left the Gambia, to be succeeded as Principal by Sam Njie.

He oversaw the introduction of WASC 'A'-level studies in the

school (which were already being conducted in Gambia High School).

Fr Gough was proud of former pupils he referred to as 'my five priests': Fr Anthony Gabisi, Fr Peter Gomez, Fr Edward Gomez, Fr David Jimoh Jarju and Fr Anthony Sonko.

During Fr Gough's time at St Augustine's the Saints soccer team triumphed in the schools league 11 times, and he greatly encouraged basketball, volleyball and athletics.

Fr Gough was himself a keen player in many sports, including Irish football, hurling, soccer, rugby football, basketball and volleyball. For eight years in The Gambia he was champion squash player. In Ireland he was a rugby coach at school, provincial and under-18 national level.

In 1983 Fr Gough was appointed a selector to the Gambia National Football Team. He served as a member of the Gambia Olympic Committee, the Gambia Football Association, and the basketball, volleyball and athletic associations.

After leaving St Augustine's in 1983, Fr Gough taught again at Blackrock College, and was counsellor to senior boys. He spent three months each year in a parish in New York State - where, as in Ireland, he spearheaded fund-raising for sports interests in The Gambia, including the Father Gough Sports Complex at Manjai.

President Jammeh hailed Fr Gough as 'roaming ambassador for Gambian sports', and made him an honorary Gambian citizen.

Fr Gough was also an honorary citizen of the City of Banjul.

Because of failing health, Fr Gough decided in March 2013 not to continue his visits to The Gambia. In recent years he was in the care of his Congregation in Dublin.



May – Month of Mary

DEVOTION to the Mother of Jesus throughout the month of May fits well with Easter Time, because in Mary we see humanity raised to the glory of heaven through the resurrection of her Son.

Regina Coeli

During Easter Time (this year, from 16th April to 4th June) instead of the Angelus, we recite the Regina Coeli.

JOY to you, O Queen of heaven. Alleluia!
He whom you were meet to bear Alleluia!
As he promised, has arisen. Alleluia!
Pour for us to him your prayer. Alleluia!

V Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary. Alleluia!
R For the Lord has risen indeed. Alleluia!

Let us pray

O GOD, who by the resurrection of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, has given joy to the whole world: Grant that with the prayers of his mother, the Virgin Mary, we may obtain the joys of everlasting life; through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

May the Divine Assistance remain with us always, and may the souls of the faithful, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.



Do
you
know?

- 1 How many psalms are there in the Bible?
- 2 Who was Anne-Marie Javouhey?
- 3 Who, in the New Testament, writes, 'I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race. I have kept the faith'?
- 4 How many Popes have ruled the Church since the creation of the Diocese of Banjul?
- 5 What is shown in the photograph on the right?



Gambian Christian Anniversaries

April and May



45 YEARS AGO On 9th April 1972 Archbishop Francis Carroll of Monrovia consecrated the new St Therese's Church at Kanifing. It had been built by Fr Francis Farrell, who had served in The Gambia since 1937. The new St Therese's replaced the original church built by Fr Farrell in 1947 while he was Principal of St Augustine's School. The first St Therese's is now used as the Father Farrell Memorial Hall.

The consecration of the new St Therese's coincided with the Bishops' Conference of The Gambia and Sierra Leone, hosted by Bishop Michael Moloney.

Fr Farrell built a retirement house for himself (in the present-day premises of GPI) but died suddenly, in Ireland, on 23rd November 1983.

23rd April 1816: Captain Alexander Grant purchased Banjul Island from the King of the Kombos, renaming it St Mary's Island. The former Grant Street in Banjul was named after him.

18th April 1848: The first Mass was celebrated in a converted room in Banjul.

18th April 1849: Bishop Aloysius Kobès of Dakar bought for 2,500 French francs the plot where the Cathedral stands.

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

14th April 1850: Four Sisters of the Immaculate Conception arrived from France to open a school for girls.

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

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

1st May 1931: Bishop Augustin Grimault confirmed 30 young people.

4th May 1935: Arrival of Sr Albert Byrne SJC, who served in Gambia until her death in Banjul on 16th July 2001, aged 90.

15th April 1936: Fr Harold Whiteside celebrated the first Mass at Old Jeshwang.

9th April 1948: Opening of the first St Therese's Church Kanifing, now used as the parochial hall (*see above*)

13th April 1951: In Freetown, the Archbishop of Canterbury consecrated Rodney Norman Coote as Second Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Gambia & Rio Pongas.

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

8th April 1958: Completion of the mission house in Bwiam, supervised by Fr Reginald Gillooly.

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

24th April 1960: Bishop Moloney blessed Star of the Sea Church Bakau.

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

2nd April 1962 (55 years ago): Bishop Moloney blessed a bell at the Cathedral.

9th April 1966: Following Vatican II, Bishop Moloney set up three commissions: liturgy, headed by Fr Hugh Fagan; ecumenism, Fr Michael Flynn; and the laity, Fr Seán Little.

4th April 1980: Bishop Moloney announced his resignation due to ill health.

5th April 1983: Cluny Sisters celebrated 100 years in Gambia.

13th April 1985: At Bakau Stadium, Bishop Michael Cleary ordained Anthony Gabisi and Peter Gomez as priests and David

Jimoh Jarju and Edward Gomez as deacons.

12th April 1986: Ordination of Fr Edward Gomez.

26th April 1986: Ordination of Fr David Jimoh Jarju.

21st April 1989: The renovated church at Bwiam was rededicated to Our Lady of Fatima.

25th April 1992 (25 years ago): Opening of All Saints Brikama.

17th April 1993: Opening of St James Kandunkou.

23rd April 1995: Opening of Holy Rosary Lamin.

10th April 1999: Bishop Cleary ordained Fr Joseph Karbo and Fr Michael Ndecky.

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

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

6th April 2006: Death of Margareta Edenius, long-term Swedish benefactor of education in The Gambia.

14th May 2006, Feast of St Matthias: Episcopal Ordination at Bakau Stadium of the Rt Revd Robert Ellison CSSp.

1st April 2006. Palm Sunday: Bishop Ellison blessed the Chapel of Perpetual Adoration at St Therese's Kanifing.

28th April 2007 (10 years ago): Bishop Emeritus Michael Cleary opened the Anne-Marie Javouhey Academy Brusibi.

29th April 2007 (10 years ago): Opening of the Church of St Teresa of Calcutta at Mariamakunda.

12th May 2007: The Cluny Sisters held a Mass of Thanksgiving to mark the 200th anniversary of the founding of their Order.

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

25th May 2008: Death in Dakar of Mgr Pierre Sagna CSSp, Bishop Emeritus of St Louis du Sénégal, who had spent his retirement at Holy Cross Brusibi. PIX?

During May 2008: Bishop Ellison took part in the Bishops' Conference of The Gambia & Sierra Leone in Freetown.

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

11th May 2009: Brother Marcelin, Principal of the Lycée Sacré Cœur Ziguinchor, visited St Peter's School Lamin, with 11 teachers and 84 pupils.

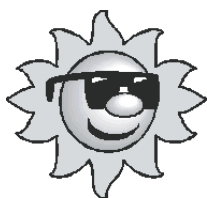
24th May 2009: The Methodist Mission achieved autonomy from the parent mission in Britain.

2nd May 2009: President Jammeh made Bishop Ellison a Commander of the Order of the Republic of The Gambia (CRG).

During April 2010: *Ad limina* visit to Rome of Bishop Ellison and his brother bishops of Sierra Leone and Liberia.

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

End of May 2015: After serving in The Gambia since 1967, Fr Michael Casey CSSp returned finally to Ireland.



Fee moi Gambia

Looking forward

A READER comments that this column is 'rather too much about the past'. To which I might reply, 'Those who don't know their roots are ill-equipped to tackle the future.'

But there is indeed good cause these days for us to look forward in hope, both as Gambians and as Christians.

As Gambians, we are thankful, hopeful - and intrigued - that we have a new government.

History has undoubtedly been made in recent times, which many have labelled the most remarkable since Independence in 1965.

There's no doubt that our new government faces many challenges in the economic, educational and social spheres. No one should suppose that all these challenges can be tackled without commitment, consultation and firm resolve on the part of planners and administrators. Nor should anyone suppose that government alone can bring about this nation's progress and prosperity.

What government can progressively do is to create the conditions in which the people - you and I - can improve our way of life in the family, our local community, at school and at work.

We need to be better-informed about current concerns, and alert to take advantage of our talents and opportunities. In a word, we need to be more responsive and responsible; to think of ourselves as partners of government, of the government that we have elected.

We now look forward to electing a new National Assembly. Let's make informed, pragmatic choices, considering the common good, not our own fancies or favourites.

Thank God we can be confident that Muslims and Christians alike, regardless of political allegiance, are active in prayer for our government and country.

As Christians, we look forward to Easter - the festival of the Resurrection, the very basis of our faith. Soon, too, we shall be celebrating the 60th birthday of the Diocese of Banjul - looking back and looking confidently forward.

Then there's the 400th anniversary in October of the birth of the Reformation - which I might irreverently call 'Martin Luther and all that'. Neither Catholics nor Protestants can be happy with the story of the Reformation, much of which, in sentiment and action, was scarcely in the spirit of our loving Lord. Tempers are nowadays more tolerant, relations more warm. But there's much more to do before the unity for which we surely pray can be achieved.

There's lots more to say and think about the future for us Gambians and us Christians. Let's get thinking, and acting!

Dusty (or rusty) answer

INDIGNANT customer to used-car salesman: 'When I bought this car, you assured me it was rust-free.'

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

Confession

A GOOD while ago I wrote, 'We have, rightly, a sense of privilege about being able to take part in the Mass. But we are fortunate, too, that Gambian and other creative artistes - painters, musicians, playwrights and actors - are endeavouring to share their insights and talents with us. They need support, they need encouragement. If we ignore or neglect them, we impoverish ourselves.'

I think of myself as a theatre-lover. But I confess that for some time I've not seen many stage productions. When it was called the Alliance Franco-Gambienne (now the Alliance Française) I used to go to plays there (some of them ill-attended, even the well-presented). But - and I don't like to admit this - I haven't been to the Ebunjan Theatre.

I promise myself and you that I'll put this right as soon as possible...

Advice galore

HAVE you noticed how many articles there are these days in our various newspapers containing all sorts of advice to the President and his team? This alone shows how much has changed.

Like many a reader, probably, I have a list of things I'd like to see done. I am concerned about education, cleaning the environment and promoting safety on the roads; and you will have your own 'wish-list'.

But I don't want to add to the torrent of advice. All the same, it's clear that we're at the dawn of a new era. One of my expatriate friends says how glad - indeed, thankful - she feels to have been here at a time of positive change. I appreciate this feeling. Don't you?

Not worth mentioning?

THE MORNING after the Presidential inauguration on 18th February I listened, as I often do, to RFI (Radio France Internationale). Not one word did I hear about the great ceremony at Bakau - rightly described as 'historic' for this nation, with so many heads of state and government attending.

Instead, RFI gave their listeners the usual litany of international bad news: controversy, scandal, terrorism, disaster and mayhem.

Yet during our constitutional crisis in December and January there was almost daily coverage on RFI and various other news channels, second only to the blanket coverage of Donald Trump.

Is good news 'no news' for RFI and much of the media?

A little less, please

MOST drivers seem to want to go as fast as possible. So how so can they possibly read the giant bill-boards which border (I was going to say 'litter') our urban roads?

Most of these hoardings are so crowded with pictures and information that even a pedestrian can hardly take them in.

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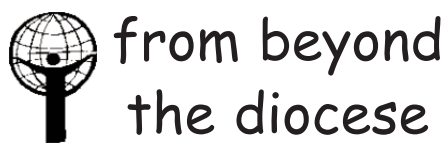
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from beyond
the diocese

Pope visits Anglican church in Rome



IN Rome on 26th February, Pope Francis visited the Church of All Saints - the first Pope to visit an Anglican church in the Diocese of Rome. The Pope took part in evensong (evening prayer) and the blessing of a specially-commissioned icon. His visit was part of celebrations for the 200th anniversary of the first Anglican Eucharist at All Saints on 27th October 1816.

To mark the Pope's gesture, All Saints has been 'twinned' with the Catholic parish of All Saints - *Ognissanti* - in the south of Rome.

In recent years, members of the Catholic parish have worked with All Saints Anglican Church to help the homeless, and the two communities have attended each other's liturgical celebrations.

In his homily, Francis acknowledged that Anglicans and Catholics had in past centuries 'viewed each other with suspicion and hostility'. He encouraged both faiths to be 'always more liberated from our respective prejudices from the past'.

In another historic development, on Monday 13th March, Anglican evensong was celebrated in St Peter's Basilica. The service was sung by the choir of Merton College, Oxford. The preacher was Archbishop Arthur Roche, Secretary of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments.

The date for evensong in St Peter's was chosen as the nearest available day to the feast of St Gregory the Great, who has become an unofficial patron of relations between the two churches. It was Gregory who in the 6th century sent St Augustine to England to spread the Gospel. Augustine became the first Archbishop of Canterbury.

The evensong in St Peter's came five months after Pope Francis and Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Justin Welby, together celebrated Vespers at the Basilica of *San Gregorio al Celio* to mark the Anglican Centre's fiftieth anniversary.

** Anglicans split from Catholicism in 1534, when England's King Henry VIII was denied a marriage annulment. Both churches are striving toward greater closeness, despite obstacles.

Pope and Archbishop to visit South Sudan

DURING his visit to the Anglican parish in Rome, the Pope confirmed that he will soon visit South Sudan, one of the world's poorest countries, and ravaged by armed conflict and famine.

Pope Francis will be accompanied by Dr Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury and symbolic head of the world's Anglican Communion.

Their trip will include a stop-over in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Pope Francis also plans to visit Egypt before the end of the year.



Archbishop Welby and Pope Francis

Christian hope returns to Iraq

AFTER years of darkness, hope has returned to Telekuf-Tesqopa, in Iraq. Located 17 miles from Mosul, the village is rebuilding after being liberated from ISIS.

As a visible sign of the rebuilding, a giant cross has been erected, marking the victory of the Christian faith against the darkness of ISIS.

On 18th February the Chaldean Catholic Patriarch of Baghdad, Louis Sako, visited the village, where he blessed the cross and participated in the first Mass for over two years in St George's Church. The regional authorities were present at the celebration.

Patriarch Sako said that the event was 'the first spark of light shining in all the cities of the Nineveh Plain since the darkness of ISIS, which lasted almost two and a half years.'

He said that now is the time to regain hope and for the people to return to begin a new stage of life. Christians would thus demonstrate to the world that the forces of darkness, which ravaged their land, are ephemeral, and that the Church of Christ, although it suffers, is built upon rock.

After the Mass, everyone went to a hill outside the village. There the Patriarch blessed the cross, which was raised amid fireworks. The Patriarch said that the cross would announce to the world that 'this is our land; we were born here and we will die here.'

St George's Church was cleaned by volunteers from the French aid organisation *SOS Chrétiens d'Orient*. In every village liberated on the Plain of Nineveh, Christians have made wooden crosses and have placed them on the roofs of churches and houses.

Muslims have also participated in these events. A group of Muslim youth joined those cleaning a church dedicated to the Virgin Mary in east Mosul, liberated by the Iraqi Army.

Their action was part of a campaign that seeks to remember the religious co-existence that was present in the city before ISIS occupied it in 2014.

Palestine opens embassy at Vatican



IN mid-January, Palestinians opened an embassy at the Holy See.

The Vatican has recognised Palestine as a state since November 2012, following a United Nations vote that recognised it as a non-member observer state. Pope Francis, during a visit to the Holy Land in 2014, referred to President Mahmoud Abbas as the 'President of Palestine'. In June 2015 the Vatican signed a treaty that acknowledged the 'State of Palestine' as an entity.

But for Palestinians, statehood isn't even close to being a reality. Israel, which captured Gaza and the West Bank during the 1967 Six-Day War, continues to control the borders of these territories. The wall it built around the West Bank severely limits Palestinians' mobility, while Israel's partial blockade of Gaza - strictly limits who can enter or leave the territory. Egypt maintains an even tighter blockade.

After meeting the Pope prior to the opening of the embassy, Mr Abbas said Palestinians are 'very grateful about the role that the Holy See has played for a just and lasting peace in the Holy Land... We are proud to be the birthplace of Christianity and having one of the oldest Christian communities in the world.'

Church in Congo 'deliberately targeted'

THE CATHOLIC Church in the Democratic Republic of Congo is being 'deliberately targeted' with acts of violence, a cardinal has said.

Following a surge in violence against Catholics, Cardinal Laurent Monsengwo of Kinshasa issued a statement condemning two attacks on a parish and a major seminary. He warned that the Church was being deliberately attacked 'in order to sabotage her mission of peace and reconciliation... Along with all bishops, we denounce these acts of violence, which are likely to plunge our country further into unspeakable chaos.'

The DRC is in political crisis. The President, Joseph Kabila, has refused to step down, although he has no mandate to govern. The Church is a respected mediator in the country, and previously brokered a constitutional agreement which means that presidents cannot serve a third term in power.

Cardinal Monsengwo called upon Congo's leaders to resolve the crisis, saying that history will judge them on their failure to act. 'Politicians ought to acknowledge with humility, before their nation and the international community... the immorality of their self-serving decision.'

Catholics make up about half the country's 67.5 million inhabitants.

Doctor 'asked family to hold down struggling euthanasia victim'

DUTCH prosecutors are examining the case of an elderly woman who was reportedly drugged and then pinned down while a doctor pumped deadly drugs into her body.

The doctor has been reprimanded for performing euthanasia on a patient who was suffering dementia and could not properly consent. When the woman was diagnosed with dementia four years ago she indicated that she was willing to end her life by euthanasia, 'but not now'. Her nursing home decided the moment had arrived when she began wandering the wards at night and behaving aggressively.

The doctor reportedly drugged the woman's coffee to calm her down, an act the regional euthanasia assessment committee decided was wrong. The doctor also allegedly asked the woman's family to hold her down when she 'reacted negatively' to the procedure and ripped out the drip carrying the euthanasia drugs. The assessment committee said the doctor had 'crossed a line', and has passed the case to prosecutors to decide if a crime was committed.

The forcible euthanasia is the first involving a doctor to be referred to the prosecution service. Dutch law, which dates from 2002, permits euthanasia only in cases of unbearable and untreatable suffering; but it is increasingly used on people with dementia and mental health problems.

The total of euthanasia deaths in Holland in 2015 - some 5,306 cases - represents a leap of 50 per cent in the last five years.

Euthanasia and Catholic teaching

The term euthanasia is derived from the Greek *euthanatos*, which means 'easy death'.

Euthanasia is the termination of a very sick person's life to relieve them of suffering. A person who undergoes euthanasia usually has an incurable condition - but there are other instances where some people want their life to be ended. In many cases euthanasia is carried out at the person's request, but some may be too ill, and the decision is made by relatives or, in some instances, by the courts.

Catholic teaching is that human beings are free agents, but that their freedom does not extend to the ending of their own lives. Euthanasia and suicide are both a rejection of God's absolute sovereignty over life and death. A person who insists that he has the 'right to die' is denying the truth of his fundamental relationship with God. It is therefore morally wrong to commit suicide, and morally wrong to help someone to commit suicide.

The Church teaches that it is acceptable to refuse extraordinary and aggressive medical means to preserve life. Refusing such treatment is not euthanasia, but a proper acceptance of the human condition in the face of death.

Pope ready to meet both sides in Venezuela crisis

POPE Francis is willing to meet Venezuela's government and opposition to relaunch efforts to solve the country's political crisis, a Vatican envoy has said.

The Pope encouraged the two sides to hold talks last year to ease tensions, but the dialogue broke down in December.

The President and opposition leaders have said that they are considering going to meet Francis - the first Pope from Latin America - at the Vatican.

Some weekday celebrations: March & April

Friday 7th April: St Jean-Baptist de la Salle *priest*

BORN in Rheims, France, in 1631, Jean-Baptiste devoted himself to establishing schools for the poor. He founded the religious congregation, the Salesians. He endured many hardships, dying in Rouen in 1719.

Tuesday 25th April: St Mark *evangelist*

THE GOSPEL attributed to St Mark is the shortest of the four Gospels, and probably the first to be written. John Mark was a cousin of St Barnabas. It was at his mother's house in Jerusalem that the disciples assembled (Acts 12:12). Mark travelled with Barnabas and Paul to Cyprus (Acts 12:25; 13:13; 15:26-39). He left them there, but later helped Paul when he was in prison in Rome. Tradition says that Mark's Gospel was based on Peter's reminiscences.

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

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

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



ATHANASIUS was born in 293 at Alexandria, Egypt. In 325 he took part in the first Council of the Church in Nicæa (now Iznik, in Turkey). The council condemned Arianism, a heresy which denied Christ's divinity. In 328 Athanasius was appointed Patriarch of Alexandria, but in 336 theological disputes led to his banishment. He repeatedly returned from exile and resumed his office. But in 356 he was banished by the Emperor Constantine, and withdrew to Upper Egypt, where he wrote theological works. Constantine's death in 361 gave Athanasius a respite; but renewed controversy forced him to flee into the Theban desert. At the time of his death in 373, Athanasius was again in possession of his diocese.

The creed named after Athanasius was not written by him. It defines the Persons of the Trinity as revealed by the Holy Spirit, and is accepted by Catholics, Orthodox, Anglicans and most Protestants.

Wednesday 3rd May: St Philip & St James *apostles*

PHILIP was one of the twelve apostles, fellow-countryman of Andrew and Peter, whose home was in Bethsaida, a fishing-village by the Lake of Galilee. In the early Church he was one of the 'seven men of good repute' appointed to care for widows (Acts 6:1-5). When persecution broke out after the death of Stephen, Philip went down to Samaria as a preacher and healer (Acts 8:5-13). He converted and baptised an Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-39). Later, Paul and his companions, on their way to Jerusalem, stayed with Philip at Cæsarea (Acts 21:8).

JAMES is mentioned in the Gospels only in passing, but appears in Acts and the letters of Paul as a leader of the early Church. As leader of the Christian community in Jerusalem, he gave judgment on whether Gentiles had to be circumcised before they could be received into the Church. (Acts 15:1-19). *Note that this James is not to be confused with the other apostle named as James, son of Zebedee and brother of John, often called James the Great, whose feast day is Tuesday 25th July.*

Thursday 26th May: St Philip Neri *priest*



PHILIP Neri, known as the 'Second Apostle of Rome', was born in 1515. He was ordained at the age of 35. Gathering young people together for spiritual exercises, he found himself leading a group of priests who wished to live together not bound by vows but united in charity in an institution called the Oratory. Philip was the friend of popes, noted for his preaching, modesty and humour. He died in 1595 and was canonised in 1622. Since then, other oratories have been founded.

Saturday 27th May: St Augustine of Canterbury

AUGUSTINE was born in 6th-century Rome, and became a Benedictine friar. Pope Gregory I sent Augustine and forty missionaries to England. They arrived in 597. Augustine converted King Ethelbert of Kent and many of his subjects. On the Pope's instructions, he purified many pagan temples, consecrated 13 other bishops, and became the first Archbishop of Canterbury. He died in 604. *We pray today for the Governors, Principal, staff and pupils of St Augustine's Senior Secondary School.*

Wednesday 31st May: Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

TODAY marks the end of the end of the Month of Mary (see page 22). We celebrate the visit of Mary to her cousin Elizabeth, as related in Luke 1:39-56. In Elizabeth's house, Mary exclaimed the *Magnificat* - the hymn the universal Church says or sings at Vespers every day.



Daily Mass Readings



Sunday readings Year A Weekday readings Year 1

April & May

Celebrations in brackets () are optional

Sat 1st April Jeremiah 11:18-20. Psalm 7:2-3,9-12. John 7:40-53

Sun 2nd Ezekiel 37:12-14. Psalm 129:1-8. Romans 8:8-11. John 11:1-45
 Mon 3rd Daniel 13:1-9,15-17,19-30,33-62. Psalm 22:1-6. John 5:1-11
 Tue 4th Numbers 21:4-9. Psalm 101:2-3,16-21. John 8:21-30
 Wed 5th Daniel 3:14-20,91-92,95. Daniel 3:52-56. John 8:31-42
 Thu 6th Genesis 17:3-9. Psalm 104:4-9. John 8:51-59
 Fri 7th Jeremiah 20:10-13. Psalm 17:2-7. John 10:31-42
 Sat 8th Ezekiel 37:21-28. Jeremiah 31:10-13. John 11:45-56

5th SUNDAY of LENT

[St Isadore]
 [St Vincent Ferrer]

[St John Baptist de la Salle]

PALM SUNDAY, HOLY WEEK & THE EASTER TRIDUUM Sunday 9th to Sunday 16th April: full details, pages 14-18

Mon 17th Acts 2:14,22-33. Psalm 15:1-2,5,7-11. Matthew 28:8-15
 Tue 18th Acts 2:36-41. Psalm 32:4-5,18-20,22. John 20:11-18
 Wed 19th Acts 3:1-10. Psalm 104:1-4,6-9. Luke 24:13-35
 Thu 20th Acts 3:11-26. Psalm 8:2,5-9. Luke 24:35-48
 Fri 21st Acts 4:1-12. Psalm 117:1-2,4,22-27. John 21:1-14.
 Sat 22nd Acts 4:13-21. Psalm 117:1,14-21. Mark 16:9-15.

MONDAY in EASTER WEEK
 TUESDAY in EASTER WEEK
 WEDNESDAY in EASTER WEEK
 THURSDAY in EASTER WEEK
 FRIDAY in EASTER WEEK
 SATURDAY in EASTER WEEK

Sun 23rd Acts 2:42-47. Psalm 117:2-4,13-15,22-24. 1 Peter 1:3-9. John 20:19-31
 Mon 24th Acts 4:23-31. Psalm 2:1-9. John 3:1-8.
 Tue 25th 1 Peter 5:5-14. Psalm 88:2-3,6-7,16-17, Mark 16:15-20
 Wed 26th Acts 5:17-26. Psalm 33:2-9. John 3:16-21
 Thu 27th Acts 5:27-33. Psalm 33:2,9,17-20. John 3:31-36
 Fri 28th Acts 5:34-42. Psalm 26:1,4,13-14. John 6:1-15
 Sat 29th Acts 6:1-7. Psalm 32:1-2,4-5,18-19. John 6:16-21.

2nd SUNDAY of EASTER

(St Fidelis of Sigmaringen)
 St MARK

(St Peter Chanel or St Louis M. Grignon de Montfort) *abstinence*
 St Catherine of Siena

Sun 30th Acts 2:14,22-33. 1 Peter 1:17-21. Luke 24:13-35
 Mon 1st May Acts 6:8-15. Psalm 118:23-24,26-27,29-30. John 6:27-29
 or for Joseph: Genesis 1:26 - 2:3 or Colossians 3:14-15,17,23-24. Psalm 89:2-4,12-14,16. Matthew 13:54-58
 Tue 2nd Acts 7:51 - 8:1. Psalm 30:3-4,6-8,17,21. John 6:30-35.
 Wed 3rd 1 Corinthians 15:1-8. Psalm 18:2-5. John 14:6-14
 Thu 4th Acts 8:26-40. Psalm 65:8-9,16-17,20. John 6:44-51
 Fri 5th Acts 9:1-20. Psalm 116:1-2. John 6:52-59
 Sat 6th Acts 9:31-42. Psalm 115:12-17. John 6:60-69

3rd SUNDAY of EASTER

(St Joseph the Worker)
 St Athanasius.
 St PHILIP & St JAMES

abstinence

Sun 7th Acts 2:26-41. Psalm 22:1-6. 1 Peter 2:20-25. John 10:1-10
 Mon 8th Acts 11:1-18. Psalm 41:2-3 & 42:3-4. John 10:1-10
 Tue 9th Acts 11:19-26. Psalm 86:1-7. John 10:22-30
 Wed 10th Acts 12:24 - 13:5. Psalm 66:2-3,5-6,8. John 12:44-50
 Thu 11th Acts 13:13-25. Psalm 88:2-3,21-22,25,27. John 13:16-20
 Fri 12th Acts 13:26-33. Psalm 2:6-11. John 14:1-6
 Sat 13th Acts 13:44-52. Psalm 97:1-4. John 14:7-14
 or for Fatima: Isaiah 61:9-11. Psalm 44:11-12,14-17. Luke 11:27-28

4th SUNDAY of EASTER

(St Nereus & St Achilleus or St Pancras) *abstinence*
 (Our Lady of Fatima)

Sun 14th Acts 6:1-7. Psalm 32:1-2,4-5,18-19. 1 Peter 2:4-9. John 14:1-12
 Mon 15th Acts 14:5-18. Psalm 113:1-4,15-16. John 14:21-26
 Tue 16th Acts 14:19-28. Psalm 144:10-13,21. John 14:27-31
 Wed 17th Acts 15:16. Psalm 212:1-5. John 15:1-8
 Thu 18th Acts 15:7-21. Psalm 95:1-3,10. John 15:9-11
 Fri 19th Acts 15:22-31. Psalm 56:8-12. John 15:12-17
 Sat 20th Acts 16:1-10. Psalm 99:2.3.5. John 15:18-21

5th SUNDAY of EASTER

(St John I)
abstinence
 (St Bernadine of Siena)

Sun 21st Acts 8:5-8,14-17. Psalm 65:1-7,16,20. 1 Peter 3:15-18. John 14:15-21
 Mon 22nd Acts 16:11-15. Psalm 149:1-6,9. John 15:26 - 16:4
 Tue 23rd Acts 16:22-34. Psalm 137:1-3,8. John 16:5-11
 Wed 24th Acts 17:15,22 - 18:1. Psalm 148:1-2,11-14. John 16:12-15
 Thu 25th Acts 1:1-11. Psalm 46:2-3,6-9. Ephesians 1:17-23. Matthew 28:16-20
 Fri 26th Acts 18:9-18. Psalm 46:2-7. John 16:20-23
 Sat 27th Acts 18:23-28. Psalm 46:2-3,8-10.

6th SUNDAY of EASTER

(St Rita of Cascia)

ASCENSION of THE LORD

St Philip Neri *abstinence*
 (St Augustine of Canterbury)

Sun 28th Acts 1:12-14. Psalm 26:1,4,7-8. 1 Peter 4:13-16. John 17:1-11
 Mon 29th Acts 19:1-8. Psalm 67:2-7. John 16:29-33
 Tue 30th Acts 20:17-27. Psalm 67:10-11,20-21. John 17:1-11
 Wed 31st Zechariah 3:14-18 or Romans 12:9-16. Isaiah 12:2-6. Luke 1:39-56

7th SUNDAY of EASTER

VISITATION of the BVM



Fatima celebrates its centenary

POPE Francis is to visit the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima on Friday 12th May, the one hundredth anniversary of the first appearance of the Virgin Mary to three children. Pope Paul VI visited Fatima on 13th May 1967, fifty years after the first apparition. Pope St John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI have also visited the shrine.

How it began

In the year 1917, in a mountainous region in central Portugal, the Virgin Mary appeared six times to three young children. Elsewhere in Europe, the 'Great War' raged. It was to cost Europe over 37 million lives.

Besides sending its sons to fight in France and North Africa, Portugal was in political chaos at home. Following a revolution in 1910, there had been a succession of governments. The monarchy had been replaced by a republic, with a constitution separating Church and state.

Government officials were not sympathetic to the Christian faith. But the faith was the air the people breathed, as in the village of Aljustrel, a collection of white-washed houses in the parish of Fatima.

The daily bread of the catechism

There Lucia Santos, Francisco Marto and Jacinta Marto were born. They were brought up in homes with the catechism as their daily bread, Bible stories their recreation; and the word of the village priest was law.

Lucia de Jesus Santos was born, the youngest of seven children, to Antonio and Maria Rosa Santos, on 22nd March 1907. She was a plain child with sparkling eyes and a magnetic personality - a natural leader to whom other children looked with confident affection.

Blessed with an excellent memory, Lucia was able to learn her catechism and make her First Communion and Confession when she was six. She became a catechist at the age of nine.



Lucia was the constant companion of her cousins Francisco and Jacinta Marto.

The Lady of the Rosary

From May to October 1917 the three children reported a vision of a woman who identified herself as the Lady of the Rosary. On 13th October a crowd of about 70,000 witnessed an amazing solar phenomenon, just after the children had seen their vision.

The first national pilgrimage to the site was held in 1927. The construction of a basilica began in 1928. It is now flanked by retreat houses and hospitals, facing a square where many miraculous cures have been reported.



'The experience of a life-time'

The late JOHN CARDOS reported on a Gambian pilgrimage in 2005

OUR pilgrimage to Fatima and Rome began at Kanifing on the first Thursday of November.

We went by bus to Banjul ferry terminal, where many Christian and Muslim relatives and friends were waiting to wish us Godspeed - among them Fr Peter Gomez, Sr Mary Potin and Foday Bah, members of the National Pilgrimage Committee.

Having crossed the river, we journeyed from Barra to Dakar. After dinner at the airport, we checked in at 1.30 am for the Air Portugal flight to Lisbon.

After our 7 am landing at Lisbon, two 10-seater vans took us to Fatima and the Hotel *Virgem Maria*. Following evening prayer and dinner, we paid our first visit to the grotto, where we took part in the rosary, the procession and Benediction before returning to the hotel for a good night's rest.

Our programme from Monday 6th to Saturday 12th November was varied. We began always with Mass at 7 am in the hotel chapel, followed by breakfast at 8 am. From 10 we participated in various activities. There was Mass in Latin or English on certain days at the grotto or the basilica. On Wednesday 8th it was memorable to attend Mass in the square concelebrated by a cardinal, 25 bishops and 120 priests from all over the world.

We visited the birthplace of Francisco Marto, Jacinto Marto and their cousin Lucia in the village of Aljustrel, and later visited their graves. We stopped at the apparition sites of the angel and the Blessed Virgin Mary, and visited Fatima Museum.

For us, the pilgrimage to Fatima was the experience of a life-time: we had ample opportunity to pray, meditate and seek a deeper understanding of God's gifts of faith, love, joy and mercy.

On to Rome

We left Lisbon on Sunday 13th November to fly to Rome, where for four days we lodged at the Instituto Assunta, just a brief ride to the bus terminal near St Peter's Square.

To set foot in the nerve centre of the Catholic Church was the fulfilment of a dream.

Our programme included attending prayers in various chapels and visits to the tombs of popes, including that of Pope St John Paul II. We climbed more than 300 steps to the dome of St Peter's. Of course, not every member of the group could attempt the climb; so the others took time to meet Catholic groups from Brazil, the USA, Senegal, Namibia and Cameroon, as well as visiting the Reliquary and the Library.

On our final day, after Mass and checking out from the *Instituto Assunta*, we visited St John Lateran and other religious monuments before leaving at midday for the airport and the flight to Dakar.

We arrived at Léopold Senghor Airport at 2.30 am on Thursday 17th November. Foday Bah was there to welcome us and accompany us back to Banjul and Kanifing.

Our trip was led by Fr Tony Gabisi, assisted by Joseph Pabi Joof and myself. We commend the National Pilgrimage Committee for their efficient organisation.

We thank Almighty God for the success of the pilgrimage.

John Cardos was Secretary of the National Pilgrimage Committee

Answers to Do You Know? page 22

- 1 150
- 2 Anne-Marie Javouhey, founder of the Sisters of St Joseph of Cluny, was the first Catholic missionary in the 19th century to come to The Gambia. She worked in the hospital in Banjul in 1822, but did not stay long because she had missionary work in hand elsewhere. The street in Banjul leading to the Accident and Emergency department of the hospital is named after her.
- 3 St Paul: 2 Timothy 4:2
- 4 Seven: Pius XII (1939-58); John XXIII (1958-63); Paul VI (1963-78); John Paul I (1978); St John Paul II (1978-2005); Benedict XVI (2005-13); Frances (from 2013)
- 5 The Bishop's throne in the Cathedral of the Assumption, Banjul



The Pope's Prayer Intentions

April

That young people may respond generously to their vocations and seriously consider offering themselves to God in the priesthood or consecrated life.

May

That Christians in Africa, in imitation of the Merciful Jesus, may give prophetic witness to reconciliation, justice, and peace.



Dominus meus et Deus meus!

My Lord and my God!

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' When he had said this he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.'

But Thomas (who was called the Twin) one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord.' But he said to them, 'Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.'

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas with them. Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt, but believe.'

Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!'

Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.'

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

John 20:19-31

*The Gospel reading for the Second Sunday in Easter Time
(Divine Mercy Sunday) 23rd April*