

**Bishop Mendy's New Year Message:
*Restoring the culture of peace***

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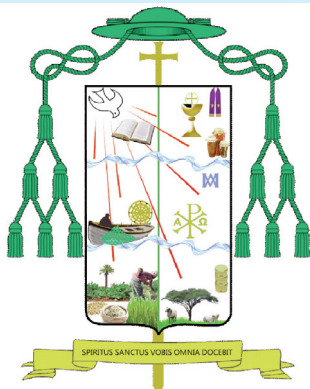
**Ash Wednesday
*'A handful of dust'***

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Volume 44 No. 1

FEBRUARY & MARCH 2020

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The Diocese of Banjul **NEWSLETTER**

Incorporating The Catholic Newsletter

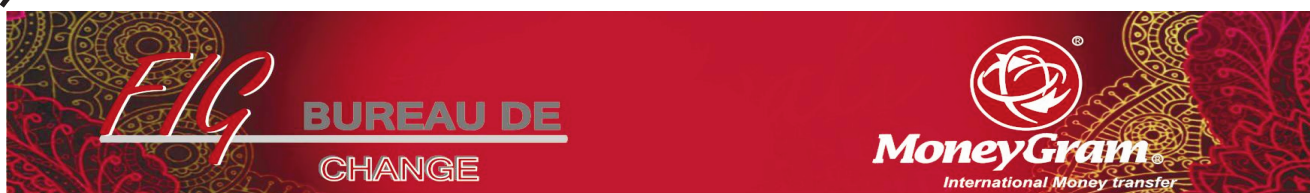
**Congratulations on your
Second Episcopal Anniversary**



**THOUGHTS,
PRAYERS
& READINGS
FOR MASS
EVERY SUNDAY,**

Page 14

Most Revd Dr Gabriel Mendy CSSp



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LIST OF BRANCHES & IMPLANTS

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



By way of introduction

Noteworthy Days

THREE days in particular this February merit our attention.

The first comes at the beginning of the month. 2nd February is 'Candlemas' – the Presentation of the Infant Christ in the Temple. It's a feast day generally overlooked; but not this year, because it falls on a Sunday.

At Candlemas, the Mass is preceded by a procession of the faithful bearing lighted candles. The candles symbolise our homage to Christ as the Light of the World – 'the light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel'. We, the candle-bearers, must surely seek to show the light of Christ to others, and so play our own part, however humble, in bringing about his kingdom.

Let us pray that the celebration of Candlemas will encourage us in our witness to light, peace and the service of others.

The second significant day in February is Tuesday 18th February – Independence Day.

Most Gambians have an awareness of 'family', of being part of a nation with a sense of its own destiny. There's considerable economic, social and cultural variety in our country, but we're bound together by our common nationhood. Or at least, that is our aspiration. Bishop Gabriel Mendy, in his New Year Message, has reminded us of our need to maintain our traditional culture of peace.

The Catholic community in The Gambia, and indeed the wider Christian community, have played an honourable role in our country's development, in harmony with our more

numerous Muslim brothers and sisters. We should be actively aware of the need for continuing national development, and our Christian commitment to do all we can to contribute to peace, harmony and interdependence across the whole nation.

And what is the third significant day in February?

It is, of course, Ash Wednesday, the 26th day of the month.

On that day, our churches will be full – commendably so. But Ash Wednesday is just a beginning. It marks the start of Lent. Lent is an insistent invitation for us all, singly and together, to think less of ourselves and more of others. Above all, to grow closer to Our Lord as the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Lord, free me from myself
To be able to serve you,
To be able to love you,
To succeed in listening to you
In every brother or sister you make me meet.

(G. Volpi)



The Pope's Prayer Intentions



February - Listening to migrants' cries

We pray that the cries of our migrant brothers and sisters, victims of criminal trafficking, may be heard and considered.

March - Catholics in China

We pray that the Church in China may persevere in its faithfulness to the Gospel, and grow in unity.

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Here & there

NEWS FROM AROUND THE DIOCESE



Pilgrimage of peace

ON Saturday 7th December great crowds of Gambian Catholics and many others gathered from across the country and beyond to Kunkujang Mariama in the Western Region.

It was the 33rd national pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady Queen of Peace, the first having been held in 1987.

The annual pilgrimage is held on the Saturday nearest to 8th December – the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception.

Origins

At Pentecost every year since 1888 a Marian pilgrimage has taken place to the Shrine of Our Lady of Deliverance at Poponguine, on Senegal's 'Petite Côte'. It was not until 1986, almost a hundred years after the first pilgrimage to Poponguine, that a group of lay people suggested to Bishop Michael Cleary that a Marian shrine could – and should – be established in The Gambia.

Various sites were considered, including Bwiam and Juffure, and eventually it was decided to establish the shrine at Kunkujang, where Fr John Sharpe was Parish Priest.

The original, indefatigable shrine committee prepared the football field at Kunkujang, imported seating and engaged the help of the Public Works Department (PWD), the Fire Service and the Red Cross.

Developments

After that first pilgrimage it was realised that extended facilities were needed. Bishop Cleary provided a D50,000 loan (a large sum in those days). An outdoor altar plinth was built. Fr Sharpe designed seating around the altar, and local labour made lots of slabs.

After three years or so, the Presentation Sisters identified a new site for the grotto.

For some time there were problems with the lease originally agreed with the Alkalo for a plot of some 80 by 500 metres. The lease was resented by some local farmers, but after prolonged efforts the matter was settled, and lease documents lodged with Bishop Cleary.

The shrine church subsequently built at Kunkujang seats over 1,200 worshippers, and cost more than D200,000. It was designed by Cyril Ashby, a retired Irish civil engineer. He did not live to see the opening of the church, which contains a plaque to his memory.

The church is distinguished by murals by Eleanor Yates, an American artist Fr Sharpe met by chance when she was decorating a village church in Ireland.

In recent years, in addition to the December pilgrimage, a second pilgrimage to Kunkujang Mariama has been held on the first Saturday in Lent.

Restoring the culture of peace

The New Year Message of the Bishop of Banjul, the Most Revd Dr Gabriel Mendy CSSp

SINCE 1st January 1967, the Catholic Church has observed the World Day of Peace every New Year's Day to promote peace throughout the world and address ongoing conflicts, wars, crimes and injustice against humanity.

In accordance with this tradition, the Diocese of Banjul also observes World Day of Peace on this first day of January 2020. The Catholic Church celebrates both the feast of Mary, Mother of God and World Day of Peace on New Year's Day.

This year is the 53rd World Day of Peace and the title of Pope Francis' message is 'A Journey of Hope, Dialogue, Reconciliation, and Ecological Conversion. The Church observes World Day of Peace on New Year's Day because it marks the end of a period and cycle of events. At the same time, it begins a new era full of hopes and higher expectations.

New Year's Day is also when individuals, groups, associations and governments renew and recommit themselves to all the promises, decisions and plans they could not fulfill in the past.

Awakening our collective memory

The observance of World Day of Peace is, therefore, intended to awaken our collective memory, conscience, dignity and decency as human beings and motivate us to work towards true and stable peace in societies and nations around the world.

On this day, we observe the 53rd anniversary of World Day of Peace, my message to you, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our Muslim neighbours, relatives and friends, believers of other faiths, and all Gambians at home and abroad, is for us to restore the culture of peace in The Gambia based on mutual trust and not deception and misinformation.

As Gambians, the concept of a culture of peace may not be strange and new for most of us. For a culture of peace has, until recently, prevailed in the cordial and respectful relations



of Gambians regardless of their religious, tribal, political and social background. The Gambia was renowned in the sub-region and around the world as a peaceful nation where the Muslim majority and Christian minority co-exist in harmony; where there were no tribal, political, and religious conflicts because there was a prevailing culture of peace and respect for all. Another reason why the concept of a culture of peace may not be foreign to many Gambians is because the United Nations General Assembly declared the year 2000 as the International Year for the Culture of Peace. The United Nations also declared 2001 to 2010 as the decade for the Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World. Most of us, therefore, have some sense and understanding of the culture of peace.

Nevertheless, for the sake of clarity and for the benefit of those who are unfamiliar with the idea of a culture of peace, I would briefly indicate its meaning in our context. A culture is generally a way and manner of life that is informed by the goods, practices and values of one's ethnic, historical, and sociological origins. Vatican II therefore, defined culture in *Gaudium et Spes* 53 as 'all those things which go to refining, developing and [educating] humanity's diverse mental and physical endowments.' A culture of peace is a heritage, life-style, mindset and outlook in life that generates and creates an atmosphere of cordial and mutual relationship among different peoples and neighbours living and working in communities and nations.

Negative factors

This was what existed in The Gambia in past years. Unfortunately, in recent times, the atmosphere of cordial and mutual relationship among our diverse peoples and religions was affected as a result of deception, misinformation and mistrust. It is, therefore, timely and appropriate as we begin the New Year of 2020, for us to restore the culture of peace that once prevailed in our land. After twenty years since the United Nations' declaration of the International Year for the Culture of Peace, and after another decade since the end of the first decade of the Culture of Peace, we should seriously examine ourselves and see how we Gambians have maintained and promoted our own historical culture of peace in our dear motherland.

Since the year 2000, many organisations and governments have projected 2020 as the year they would fulfill their humanitarian, economic, political and developmental visions and goals. We are now in 2020 - so the burden is on them to determine whether they succeeded in attaining their vision and goals.

But as noble and desirous these goals are, the restoration of our culture of peace that made us very prominent among the community of nations should be our common vision and priority. We surely cannot compare these estimated goals and visions with our national peace or even achieve them at the expense of our invaluable peace and unity as a country. For in the words of Pope Francis in his 2020 message for World Day of Peace, 'Peace is a great and precious value, the object of our hope and the aspirations of the entire human family.'

We must jealously safeguard this gift of peace, because it forms the core pillar and foundation of our society on which our very existence, survival and progress depend. For the sake of peace, our own good, and the stability of our nation, we

should withstand and reject those who seek to deceive, misinform and mislead us from the truth concerning our ethnic, religious and political affiliations and identity as Gambians. They simply want to create mistrust and misunderstanding among us instead of cultivating a culture of peace and unity based on mutual trust and respect for one another.

Grave concerns

From the proceedings and evidence that the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparation Commission (TRRC) has so far obtained, and the grave concerns expressed about the omissions and provisions in the draft Constitution of the Constitutional Review Commission (CRC), it is very clear that the culture of peace, unity, and mutual co-existence that existed in The Gambia before, is not only at stake, but increasingly at risk. We should, therefore, take concrete and practical steps in this New Year to ensure that this undesirable situation we never experienced before, is properly and amicably addressed to avoid the unintended consequences of disunity, disorder, and insecurity. Pope Francis recommends some steps or measures for us in his message on World Day of Peace. He says, 'How, then, do we undertake a journey of peace and mutual respect? How do we break the unhealthy mentality of threats and fear? How do we break the current dynamic of distrust? We need to pursue a genuine fraternity based on our common origin from God and exercised in dialogue and mutual trust. [For] the desire for peace lies deep within the human heart, and we should not resign ourselves to seeking anything less than this.' Our efforts to restore the culture of peace and mutual coexistence should be purely based on mutual trust and respect and not deceit and misinformation.

Thanking God

The reason we are alive and present at the beginning of another New Year is because of God's goodness, love, mercy and protection on us throughout last year. We should, therefore, thank God for his care, guidance and blessings and commend ourselves, our efforts, hopes and future into his hands. There is nothing praiseworthy we can do without God's intervention, assistance and blessings because our success and well-being depend on God. As the psalmist rightly says in Psalm 127:1-2, 'Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labour in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, in vain does the watchman keep vigil. In vain is your earlier rising and going later to rest, you who toil for the bread you eat when God pours gifts on his beloved while they slumber.'

These words should motivate and guide us throughout this New Year as we pray and endeavour to restore the culture of peace in our country based on mutual trust and not on deception and misinformation. As the Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Banjul, I pray that God will grant all Gambians, at home and abroad, a peaceful, successful, healthy and progressive New Year. May God continue to preserve our country, and all true believers in The Gambia, from the forces and agents of evil, who are against peace, unity, cooperation, mutual respect and coexistence. May God bless and protect all of you throughout this year of 2020.

*Yours in Christ,
+Most Revd Dr Gabriel Mendy CSSp
Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Banjul, The Gambia.*



CHILDREN'S PAGE

Here is a picture for you to colour



This coloring page features an adorable Ash Wednesday scene. Ash Wednesday is basically the first day of Lent and occurs 46 days before Easter.

We wish all our readers a holy Lent and a joyous Easter.

Prayers for our Priests

O JESUS, our great High Priest, hear our humble prayers for the priests of this Diocese of Banjul and priests everywhere.

Give them a bright and firm faith, and a burning love which will ever increase in the course of their priestly life. In their loneliness, comfort them. In their sorrow, strengthen them. Show them that they are needed by the Church, needed by souls, and needed for the work of redemption. *Amen.*

O LOVING Mary, mother of priests, take to your heart the sons who are so close to you because of their priestly vocation, and because of the power they have received to carry on the work of Christ in a world which needs it so much.

Be their comfort, joy and strength, and help them to live and to defend the ideal of consecrated celibacy. *Amen.*

The Gambia Christian Council

THE GAMBIA Christian Council was founded 53 years ago - in March 1966. It is made up of the three main-line churches – Anglican, Catholic and Methodist. Affiliate members include the YMCA, YWCA, the Baptist Mission, YWAM and over 50 evangelical churches. In such bodies elsewhere, the Roman Catholic Church has ‘observer’ status. But in The Gambia Christian Council, the Catholic Church has full and equal status as fellow members.

The Council provides a forum for dialogue on matters of faith and practice, initiates and implements development projects which can best be undertaken co-operatively.

The Council is recognised by the Gambia Government, and charged to register each Christian body operating in this country. In recognition of this, The Gambia Christian Council Week of Prayer for Christian Unity was observed from 18th to 25th January, 2020 at the Trinity Church, Serrekunda, with the theme ‘They showed us unusual kindness’ (*Acts 28:2*)

Family circle

Who was St Valentine?



SEVERAL early Christian martyrs were named Valentine. 14th February was the feast of St Valentine, imprisoned and clubbed to death around the year 270 for aiding persecuted Christians; also the feast of St Valentine, Bishop of Terni, martyred a few years later.

The commemoration was removed from the Catholic calendar in 1969 by Pope Paul VI. ‘Valentine’s Day’, when friends exchange ‘love tokens’ is a relic of the old pagan Roman Lupercalia of 15th February with an association dating from mediæval times of the mating season of birds.

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8 DIOCESE OF BANJUL NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY / MARCH 2020

PRIESTS IN THE DIOCESE OF BANJUL					
Priest	Title	Parish	Address	Ordination date	Telephone
Most Rev. Bishop Gabriel Mendy CSSp	Bishop of Banjul		Fajara	15-Nov-97	
Fr. Antoine Sambou	Administrator	Cathedral Parish	Banjul	15-Nov-97	7269974
Fr. Gabriel Secka	Parish Priest	Blessed Sacrament Parish	Kanifing	23-Jun-01	2607275
Fr. Joseph Carl Gomez	Parish Priest	St. Peter's Parish	Lamin	15-Nov-03	9953604
Fr. Michael Ndecky	Parish Priest	Holy Cross Parish	Brusubi	10-Apr-99	9904635
Fr. Bruno Toupan	Parish Priest	Holy Spirit Parish	Banjul	15 Nov.97	9970755
Fr. Anthony Lippo CSSp	Parist Priest	Mary Mother of God Parish	Soma	15-Jul-17	7992243
Fr. Benjamin Juana	Parist Priest	Our Lady of Fatima Parish	Bwiam	09-Jul-16	2418048
Fr. Matthias Atubu CSSp	Asst. Parish Priest	Our Lady of Fatima Parish	Bwiam	28-Jul-18	2418048
Fr. James Mendy	Parish Priest	Resurrection Parish	Brikama	24-Jan-15	7329769
Fr. Fredrick Agame CSSp	Parish Priest	Sacred Heart Parish	Bansang	23-Jul-11	7405945
Fr. Anthony Sonko	Vicar-General	St Anthony Parish	Kololi	21-Jan-89	7888990
Fr. Joseph Colley	Parish Priest	St Charles Lwanga	Fajikunda	10 Nov.2012	2024938
Fr. Peter Wojnarowski SDB	Superior Salesians of Don Bosco	St Francis Parish	Kunkujang	23-May-98	7224325
Fr. Peace Ike SDB	Salesians of Don Bosco	St Francis Parish	Kunkujang	06-Jul-13	2020117
Fr. Carlos Valdiviezo SDB	Salesians of Don Bosco	St Francis Parish	Kunkujang	8 Aug. 1998	9383396
Fr. Cornelius Umoren MSP	Parish Priest	St John the Baptist Parish	Farafenni	21-Jun-14	2940284
Fr Joseph Kojo Finn CSSp	Parish Priest	St Joseph Parish	Basse	17 Aug. 2013	2412143
Fr. Magashi Aernan Terungwa	Ass. Parish Priest	St Joseph Parish	Basse	5 Aug. 2017	3021888
Fr. Victor Ndecky	Parish Priest	St Kizito's Parish	Bakoteh	9 Nov.2013	3042184
Fr. Pius Gidi CSSp	Parish Priest	St Martin Parish	Kartong	10-Jul-04	2223265
Fr. Kofi Bour Offeh CSSp	Parish Priest	St. Michael's Parish	Njongon	11-Jul-09	2363798
Fr. John Ezeike MSP	Parish Priest	Christ The King Parish	Darsilami	22-Jun-13	2078760
Fr. Peter Gomez	Assistant Parish Priest	St. Kizito's Parish	Bakoteh	13-Apr-85	
Fr. Anthony Gabisi	Parish Priest	St Therese Parish	Kanifing	13-Apr-85	7219774
Fr Tanislaus Ndecky	Asst Parish Priest	St Therese Parish	Kanifing	24-Jan-15	2300290
Fr. Michael Gomez	Parish Priest	Star of the Sea Parish	Bakau	08-Jul-06	2583404
Fr. Peter Jammeh CSSp	Asst Parish Priest	Star of the Sea Parish	Bakau	08-Jul-06	2193320
Fr. Paschal Mendy	Rector and Director of	St Peter's Junior Seminary	Lamin	25-Nov-95	7998365
Fr. Peter S. Lopez	Director	Gambia Pastoral Institute	Kairaba Av.	15-Jul-00	7006955
Fr. David J. Jarju	Education Secretary	Catholic Education Secretariat	Kairaba Av.	26-Apr-86	9989879
Fr. John Sharpe	Retired Priest	St. Francis of Assisi Parish	Kunkujang	05-Jul-54	
Fr. Peter Chikere	Asst. Parish Priest	Christ The King Parish	Darsilami	23-Jun-18	
Most Rev. Bishop Gabriel Mendy CSSp	Bishop of Banjul	Mantel Farm	Fajara	03-Feb-18	
Fr. Mexaint Sanyang CSSp	Assistant Parish Priest	St. Peter's Parish	Lamin		
Fr. Joe Karbo	Rector in the Seminary	Sierra Leone	Freetown	10-Apr-99	
Fr. Yenes Manneh	Studies	Rome	Italy	14 Nov.09	39348883786
Fr. Moses Drammeh	Studies	USA	USA	16-Nov-02	3929636
Fr. John Mendy	Studies	Rome	Italy	21-Nov-08	7966604
Fr. Matthew Mendy	Studies	Rome	Italy	10 Nov.2012	2187995
Fr. Edward Gomez	Rector in the Seminary	Sierra Leone	Freetown	12-Apr-86	2368309

PARISH/CHURCH FEASTS (HARVEST) CALENDAR 2020

NAME OF PARISH	DATE	VENUE
St. Therese's Parish	4th October 2020	Kanifing
Blessed Sacrament Parish	1st November 2020	Kanifing Estate
Christ The King Parish	22nd November 2020	Darsilami
Cathedral of Our Lady	25th October 2020	Banjul
Holy Spirit Parish	29th November 2020	Banjul
Resurrection Parish	3rd May 2020	Brikama
St. Anthony Parish	28th June 2020	Kololi
St. Charles Lwanga Parish	7th June 2020	Fajikunda
Mary Mother of God Parish	21st - 22nd February 2020	Soma
St. Michael's Parish	26th – September 2020	Njongon
Our Lady of Fatima Parish	9th May 2020	Bwiam
Holy Cross Church	9th February 2020	Brusubi
St. Kizito's Parish	24th May 2020	Bakoteh
St. Peter's Parish	28th June or 5th July 2020	Lamin
St. Francis Parish	17th May 2020	Kunkujang Mariama
St. Martin's Parish	8th November 2020	Kartong
St. Joseph's Parish	2nd May 2020	Basse
Our Lady Star of the Sea Parish	11th October 2020	Bakau
Sacred Heart Parish	21st June 2020	Bansang
St. John the Baptist Parish	20th June 2020	Farafenni
Spiritan Thanksgiving and Harvest	31st May 2020	Holy Family Parish
Association of Diocesan Priests Thanksgiving and Harvest	26th April 2020	St. Therese's school grounds
DYC Youth Cross	June 2020	Kunkujang Mariama
Jeune Esperance (Women's Weekend of Prayer)	15th, 16th and 17th May 2020	Gambia
Pilgrimage of Reconciliation	Second Saturday in Lent (MARCH 2020)	Kunkujang Mariama

Gambian Christian Anniversaries: February & March

90 YEARS AGO: On 10th February 1930, the Catholic Boys' Secondary School was officially opened in Banjul, with Fr Harold Whiteside, an English priest, as its head.

Until the 1920s, Catholic education had been limited to primary schools. Following the establishment in 1921 by the Cluny Sisters of secondary education for girls, the need for secondary education for boys became urgent.

A second storey was added to the existing building in Hagan Street, providing accommodation for the secondary boys' classrooms.

10th February 1876: Departure for Senegal of Fr Jean Lacombe, who had spent 12 years in Gambia, 10 of them as Superior.

19th March 1886: Death at the age of 47 of Brother Florentine Matthews, who had taught in Banjul for 23 years.

24th March 1911: Death in Dakar from yellow fever of Brother André, who taught in the boys' school in Banjul with the Superior, Fr John Meehan.

15th March 1914: Consecration of the rebuilt church in Hagan Street by Bishop Hyacinth Jalabert.

11th March 1934: Fr Harold Whiteside celebrated the first Mass in Old Jeshwang in a hut used for catechism classes.

2nd February 1947: Ordination as Anglican deacon of the Revd John Colley Faye, who served on the Legislative Council and the Executive Council between 1947 and 1957.

18th February 1947: Opening of the Convent at Basse with Sr Lawrence and Sr Brigid in charge of the school.

6th February 1949: The Superior, Fr Matthew Farelly CSSp, celebrated the first Mass, outdoors, in Lamin.

20th February 1955: (65 years ago): Marriage at St Cuthbert's Anglican Church, Basse, of David Jawara (later, President of The Gambia) and Augusta Hannah Mahoney.

8th March 1955 (65 years ago): Opening of the Catholic primary school at Sambang, Upper River Region.

26th February 1959: Arrival of Fr Geoghehan and Fr Thomas Tarmey.

10th February 1960 (70 years ago): Arrival of Fr Seán Little.

February 1962: Completion of the tower at the Cathedral.

16th March 1966: In response to liturgical reforms instituted by the Second Vatican Council, the high altar in the Cathedral was moved forward so that Mass could be celebrated facing the people.

February 1975 (35 years ago): Fr Michael Flynn became Parish Priest at Star of the Sea Bakau. He was the first District Superior of the Holy Ghost Fathers to live in the priests' house at Bakau.

5th February 1976: The House of Representatives approved the new constitution of the St Anthony of Padua Society, thus making it a registered society. Its predecessor, the St Anthony of Padua Friendly Society, had been founded in 1907.

24th-27th February 1979: Bishop Moloney hosted the Bishops' Conference of The Gambia, Liberia & Sierra Leone.

27th March 1979: Alhaji Baboucarr Ousman Semega-Janneh presented his credentials to Pope John Paul II as The Gambia's first Ambassador to the Holy See.

29th February 1980 (30 years ago): Archbishop Johannes Dyba presented his credentials to President Jawara as first

Papal Nuncio to The Gambia.

4th February 1981: Funeral in Banjul, following her death in Britain, of Augusta Mahoney, former wife of Sir Dawda Jawara.

15th February 1981: It was announced that Fr Michael Cleary was to become Second Bishop of Banjul in succession to Bishop Michael Moloney (who had resigned owing to ill health the previous year).

25th March 1981: (Feast of the Annunciation) Consecration at St Augustine's High School, Banjul, of Bishop Michael Cleary.

23rd February 1992: Visit of Pope John Paul II to The Gambia.

28th February 1996: Death in The Gambia of Fr James White.

27th March 1997: Opening of St Joseph's Church, Jarjil.

31st March 2001: Death in Britain of the last Governor and first Governor-General of The Gambia, Sir John Paul.

[21st February 2003: Bishop Cleary returned from a visit to Rome.]

10th March 2005 (15 years ago): Félix Oudiane presented his credentials as Senegalese Ambassador to the Holy See.

2nd February 2006: Death in Ireland of Fr Myles Fay.

30th March 2008: Opening of the Diocesan Assembly.

2nd – 4th March 2009: A group of young Piarist priests from Senegal met at GPI as part of their formation permanente. The Piarists work in Dakar, Oussouye and Sokone.

6th March 2009: A talk on 'The Gambia, our homeland' was given at GPI by T.G.G. Senghore, regarded as historian of the Catholics in The Gambia.

18th February 2010 (10 years ago): Death, aged 50, of Francis Kenneth Balucan, Head of St Therese's Upper Basic School, Kanifing.

8th March 2010 (10 years ago): Death, aged 86, of Dr Samuel Palmer. His funeral at St Mary's Anglican Cathedral four days later was attended by his close friend, Bishop Emeritus Michael Cleary, along with Bishop Ellison and other Catholic clergy.

6th February 2011: The youth group of the Christian Community of Latrikunda (CCLK) celebrated its 10th anniversary with a Mass of Thanksgiving at St Therese, Kanifing. The parent group of CCLK was formed in 1997.

4th March 2011: The Sisters of St Joseph of Annecy celebrated their order's 50th year in The Gambia at a Mass in Holy Rosary, Lamin.

15th March 2011: Imam Baba Leigh of Kanifing addressed a meeting at GPI for priests, sisters and catechists.

3rd February 2013: Holy Cross Church, Brusubi celebrated its eighth anniversary.

23rd February 2013: A Lent pilgrimage to Kunkujang Mariama was held for the first time.

1st March 2013: Fr Joseph Gough finally left The Gambia, for health reasons, after a series of visits over several years.

18th March 2013: In Freetown, the Revd Victor Ndecky was ordained deacon by the Bishop of Bo, the Rt Revd Charles Campbell.

2nd March 2014: In the Shrine Church at Kunkujang Mariama, Fr John Sharpe celebrated a Mass to mark the 50th anniversary of his ordination.

19th March 2014: Bishop Ellison blessed the new premises at Lamin Weyoto of Holy Rosary Nursery School.

2nd February 2015 (5 years ago): Death of John Sambou, oldest catechist of the diocese, who since 1983 had been working in Kuntaur and Kaur.

22nd February 2015 (5 years ago): Bishop Robert Ellison

attended the enthronement in the Cathedral of Notre Dame des Victoires, Dakar, of the newly-appointed Archbishop of Dakar, the Most Revd Benjamin Ndiaye, who had succeeded Cardinal Théodore Adrien Sarr.

** 13th March 2015 (5 years ago): A farewell Mass for Bishop Emeritus Michael Cleary was offered by Bishop Ellison at St Therese's Church Kanifing.

21st March 2017: Death in Dublin of Fr Joseph Gough, who had served in The Gambia from 1972 to 1983. He was successively teacher, then Principal, of St Augustine's High School. In later years, he became an honorary Gambian citizen, raising funds for sports, and until 2013, visited this country regularly.

3rd February 2018 (St Blaise): Episcopal Ordination at the Independence Stadium, Bakau, of the Most Revd Dr Gabriel Mendy CSSp as Fourth Bishop of Banjul.

TIMES of SUNDAY MASS



Cathedral	Banjul	7am and 10am
Holy Spirit	Banjul	10am
St Therese	Kanifing	7am, 8am & 10 am & Saturday 6.30pm
Star of the Sea	Bakau	10.30am & Saturday 6pm
Holy Family	Bakau	8.30am
Blessed Sacrament	Kanifing Estate	10.00am
St Kizito	Bakoteh	8.30am & 10am
Holy Cross	Brusubi	10am
St Anthony	Kololi	10am & Saturday 6.30pm
St Charles Lwanga	Fajikunda	8am & 10am
Holy Rosary	Lamin	8am
St Peter	Lamin	10am
Resurrection	Brikama	10am
St Martin	Kartong	10am
Christ the King	Darsilami	10am
Our Lady of Fatima	Bwiam	10am
Mary Mother of God	Soma	10am
St John the Baptist	Farafenni	10am
Sacred Heart	Bansang	10am
St Joseph	Basse	10am

*All Catholics are required to attend Holy Mass every Sunday
and on all Holy Days of Obligation*

Good news of great joy

The Christmas Message of the Bishop of Banjul, the Most Revd Dr Gabriel Mendy CSSp

ON this joyous and peaceful day, when we celebrate the birth of the Son of God and our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, I address my Christmas message to you, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our fellow Muslim neighbours, relatives and friends, believers of other faiths, and all Gambians at home and abroad.

First of all, I sincerely praise and thank God for his infinite and unconditional love for the whole human race in fulfilling his promise to save us from sin and the forces of evil through his Son Jesus Christ.

This is also another opportunity for me to repeat and underscore my appeal for peace that I made at the National Day of Prayer for all Gambians of all tribes, religion, political affiliation and status to pray, promote, and preserve peace and mutual co-existence in our beloved country.

At this stage of our history, experience, and resolve to establish a New Gambia that ensures freedom, human rights, justice, trust, accountability, rule of law and development, we cannot afford to exploit our political, religious, and tribal differences at the expense of our relative peace, mutual co-existence, respect and equality of all Gambians. If we do, we will all pay a severe price and equally suffer the consequences. The theme of my Christmas message this year, in light of the current situation in The Gambia is, therefore, 'The Birth of Jesus is Good News of Great Joy and Peace for all Peoples.'

This statement represents part of the angels' message to the shepherds who were watching over their flock on the holy night Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem.

The angel appeared to them (Luke 2:9-13) and said, 'Do not be afraid, for I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the peoples. For today in the city of David a Saviour has been born for you, who is Christ, the Lord.'

The birth of Jesus was revealed and proclaimed to the shepherds by the angel as good news of great joy for all peoples. They were, therefore, urged not to be afraid of anything because his birth is a cause of joy for all peoples and not a reason for fear, hatred and sadness for anyone.

The angel was simply God's messenger that he sent to the shepherds, so the angel's message was God's own statement about the true reason for his Son's birth into our world. God clearly affirmed that the birth of his Son Jesus is nothing but good news of great joy for all peoples, because Jesus is Saviour of the human race. He redeemed us from sin and death and offered us a share in his divine life so that we can become true sons and daughters of God by participation and adoption.

The celebration of the birth of Jesus, his life, death, resurrection, and ascension that we Christians celebrate at Christmas, Easter, and Ascension should always be celebrated as Good News of great joy for all peoples because it attained for us the final victory of light over darkness, goodness over evil, and life over death.

In this passage, the angel fully revealed meaning of

Jesus' name, his identity and mission. He said, '...for today in the city of David, a saviour has been born for you who is Christ, the Lord.' The new-born child was identified by the angel as the saviour, anointed one, and Lord - so he was the one God promised to send his chosen people through his prophets of old. The angel's message equally assured the shepherds that God's promise of a saviour was fulfilled at the appointed time and he was named Jesus because 'he is the one who will save God's people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21). The name Jesus rightly means 'saviour', so we should proudly profess this name that represents the saviour of our human race. He was revealed to the shepherds as both saviour and Lord because he is also God who is far more superior and powerful than any other person or authority. Our Lord Jesus will, therefore, save us from the forces of sin, evil and corruption that are against our efforts to serve God and bear witness to our faith and the values of God's word in our society and world today.

If the birth of Jesus was not revealed to the shepherds as Good News of great joy for all peoples, they would probably not have set out to Bethlehem to see the Child Jesus and his Mother Mary, and Joseph. They would have been ignorant of the saviour's birth and continued in their routine of watching their sheep. But because they were reliably informed of what his birth and name means for all peoples and they were disposed and interested enough in the angel's message, they decided, on their part, 'to go to Bethlehem and see for themselves what the Lord had made known to them.' (Luke 2:15)

This clearly indicates that if God does not reveal and enlighten us about the identity and mission of his Son, we cannot take the necessary steps on our own to encounter him. No one will also know and understand that the birth of Jesus is joy and peace for all if the message is not delivered to them as the angel presented it to the shepherds. It means it is our duty today to enlighten others about the positive outcome of the birth of Jesus for the human race. As believers, we have a responsibility like the angel to help others to become interested in encountering Jesus in their lives, because Jesus was not revealed as a saviour and Lord of a particular people. He is saviour and Lord of all peoples who brings joy and peace into their lives. In this season of Christmas and throughout the year, we must proclaim Jesus as the one who saves all peoples from the power of darkness, fear, hatred and death.

A sense of disappointment and an atmosphere of unease and uncertainty about our country's future religious relations is increasingly expressed among Christians and minority groups in The Gambia. This is because the new draft constitution does not fully establish the neutrality of the state or government in matters of religion and religious affairs. We therefore believe that our religious freedom and right to worship as a minority and the equality of all religions is not fully guaranteed and assured under the provisions of the new

draft constitution that introduces the laws and judicial practice of a particular religion in its contents.

Now based on the fact that a legal and legitimate constitution of any country is duly bound to be inclusive in its representation of the concerns, aspirations and needs of all citizens, including the minority, I fervently appeal to the Constitutional Review Commission, the President, Judiciary, and our National Assembly to ensure that this is the case in our new constitution that is meant to serve our future generation.

As we await the outcome of our prayers, efforts, and divine intervention to ensure there is equality, justice and respect for all citizens of The Gambia, we celebrate and rejoice in God's love, goodness and mercy in granting us a saviour and Lord whose birth is Good News of great joy for all peoples.

For so many generations, we have an admirable tradition of Christians, Muslims, and other believers in The Gambia celebrating the feast of the birth of Christ as neighbours, relatives and friends. We express our solidarity, mutual respect, and unity by visiting each other's homes and exchanging Christmas gifts, cards and messages. As the Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Banjul and on behalf of the Christian faithful, I express my deepest gratitude to the Imam

Ratib of Banjul and the Council of Muslim Elders of Banjul for maintaining this tradition and gesture on behalf of their Muslim brothers and sisters. We continue to thank God for this great and noble tradition of celebrating Christmas and other Muslim feasts as Gambians irrespective of our religious beliefs.

Our common task now at this moment of our history as a nation is to preserve this tradition and actively promote peace, mutual co-existence, equality before the law, and respect for our religious and cultural diversities in The Gambia. I therefore take this opportunity to appeal to every Gambian at home and abroad to positively contribute towards the peace, stability, religious freedom and progress of The Gambia. As we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, I wish all Gambians a peaceful, joyful and solemn Christmas celebration. Above all, I pray that The Gambia, its Government, and peoples will experience the saving power of Jesus Christ, our Prince of Peace whose birth is a source of great joy and peace for all of us.

*Yours in Christ,
+ Gabriel Mendy CSSp
Bishop of the Diocese of Banjul, The Gambia.*

February 2020: Calendar

Catholic Calendar 2020

Presentation of the Lord	Sunday, 2nd February
Ash Wednesday	26th February
Easter Sunday	12th April
Ascension Day	Thursday, 21st May
Pentecost	Sunday, 31st May
Corpus Christi	Sunday, 14th June
Sacred Heart	Friday, 19th June
Assumption	Saturday, 15th August
All Saints	Sunday, 1st November
All Souls	Monday, 2nd November
Christ the King	Sunday, 22nd November
1st Sunday in Advent	Sunday, 29th November
Annual National Pilgrimage	Saturday, 5th December
Immaculate Conception	Tuesday, 8th December
Christmas Day	Friday, 25th December

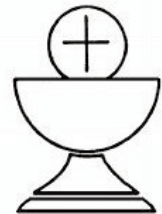
Orthodox Calendar

First Day of Great Lent	Monday 2nd March
Easter Sunday	19th April
Pentecost	Sunday 7th June

Muslim Calendar (approximate dates)

Ramadan will begin in or about Thursday 23rd April and end on or about Saturday 23rd May.

POPE Francis has reminded us that it's so important to attend Mass every Sunday, because that's where people receive Christ who saves, forgives and unites everyone to his Father, the Church and each other.



'The Sunday celebration of the Eucharist is at the centre of the life of the Church; we go to Mass to meet the risen Lord – or rather, to let ourselves be found by Him.

We attend Mass to listen to His word, feed at his table and thus become the Church – his mystical Body in the world today.

Therefore, Sunday is for us a holy day, sanctified by the Eucharistic celebration, the living presence of the Lord for us, and among us. It is the Mass that makes the Christian Sunday.

Unfortunately, there are Christian communities that cannot have Mass every Sunday, but they are also called to gather themselves in prayer that day, hearing the Word of God and keeping alive the desire for the Eucharist.

Without Christ, we are doomed to be overcome by day-to-day fatigue with worries and fear of the future.

The Sunday meeting with Jesus gives us the strength we need to live our days with courage and hope.

It is not enough to say this is a precept of the Church. We Christians need to participate in the Sunday Mass because, only with the grace of Jesus, with his presence alive in us and among us, can we practise his commandment and be credible witnesses.

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Ego sum lux mundi, dixit Dominus

'I am the light of the world,' says the Lord. John 8:12

Sunday Reflections

February & March



26th February

Ash Wednesday

Ashes, prayer and supplication

OUR use of ashes on Ash Wednesday derives from ancient tradition among the Hebrews and others. Smearing oneself or one's clothing with ashes is a sign of mourning or repentance. In Jonah 42:6, for instance, the King of Nineveh seeks to avert God's anger by wearing sackcloth and sitting in ashes. Job repents 'in dust and ashes'. Daniel writes (9:3), 'Then I turned to the Lord God to seek an answer by prayer and supplication with fasting and sackcloth and ashes.'

It is impressive in our diocese that although Ash Wednesday is not a day of obligation, many of our churches are full to overflowing. The ashes the priest smears on our foreheads do not themselves confer forgiveness. They are the outer sign of our repentance – our wish, this Lent, to turn again to Christ and make our discipleship central to our lives. *See page 19.*

Collect

GRANT, O Lord, that we may begin with holy fasting this campaign of Christian service, so that, as we take up battle against spiritual evils, we may be armed with weapons of self-restraint...

Readings: Joel 2: 12-18. Psalm 50:3-6,12-14,17. Response: Have mercy on us, O Lord, for we have sinned. 2 Corinthians 5:20 - 6:2.

Gospel acclamation: Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory! A new heart create for me, O God, and give me again the joy of your help.

Gospel: Matthew 6:1-6,16,18

Prayer over the Offerings

AS we solemnly offer the annual sacrifice for the beginning of Lent, we entreat you, O Lord, that, through works of penance and charity, we may turn away from harmful pleasures and, cleansed from our sins, may become worthy to celebrate the Passion of your Son...

Preface III of Lent

...for as you will that our self-denial should give you thanks, humble our sinful pride, contribute to the feeding of the poor, and so help us to imitate you in your kindness...

Alternatively, the priest may use Preface IV of Lent

Prayer after Communion

MAY the Sacrament we have received sustain us, O Lord, that our Lenten fast may be pleasing to you and be for us a healing remedy...

Prayer over the People

POUR out a spirit of compunction, O Lord, on those who bow before your majesty, and by your mercy may they merit the rewards you promise to those who do penance...

1st March

1st Sunday in Lent

'Lead us not into temptation'

YEAR by year, the readings for the First Sunday in Lent concern temptation.

Today's first reading comes from Genesis, the temptation in the Garden of Eden that led to Adam and Eve's disobedience, their loss of innocence and the subsequent trials that beset the whole human race.

Whether or not we acknowledge God, we are prone to put ourselves first; and so we and those around us suffer the consequences of sin, of discord, of selfishness. St Paul, in today's second reading, points out the remedy: that the Second Adam - Christ our Lord - offers the whole human race salvation from sin and death.

Today's Gospel reading is the familiar narration of Christ's ordeal in the desert, where he, like us, was subjected to temptation. But - unlike us - Jesus resisted sin. As Son of God, he could do whatever he wished: he could dazzle us, lord it over us, ensure a following by displays of power and glory, shower us with material gifts. But he chose to share our common human condition to the uttermost, 'taking the form of a servant', living in poverty, forcing his teaching on no one, winning hearts by love and truth.

No-one can lead us through Lent but our Master and Brother, Jesus.

Collect

GRANT, almighty God, through the yearly observance of holy Lent, that we may grow in understanding of the riches hidden in Christ, and by worthy conduct pursue their effects...

Readings: Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7. Psalm 50:3-6,12-14,17.

Response: Have mercy on us, O Lord, for we have sinned. Romans 5:12-19.

Gospel acclamation: Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory! Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.

Gospel: Matthew 4:1-11

Prayer over the Offerings

GIVE us the right dispositions, O Lord, we pray, for by them we celebrate the beginning of this venerable and sacred time...

Preface

...by abstaining forty long days from earthly food, he consecrated through his fast the pattern of our Lenten observance, and by overcoming all the snares of the ancient serpent taught us how to cast out the leaven of malice; so that, celebrating worthily the Paschal Mystery, we might pass over at last to the eternal paschal feast...

Prayer after Communion

RENEWED now with heavenly bread, by which faith is nourished, hope increased, and charity strengthened, we pray, O Lord, that we may learn to hunger for Christ, the true and living Bread, and strive to live by every word which proceeds from your mouth...

Prayer over the People

MAY bountiful blessing, O Lord, we pray, come down upon your people, that hope may grow in tribulation, virtue be strengthened in temptation, and eternal redemption be assured.

*8th March***2nd Sunday in Lent****Light and fulfilment**

THE PATRIARCH Abraham, earlier known as Abram, was chosen by God to be the first of his very own people: the countless people who acknowledged and served him as the One God. Now, in the fullness of time, comes Jesus, the Prophet, Priest, Saviour and King who sums up in his life and teaching every word of prophecy from Abraham to John the Baptist.

This was unforgettably revealed to Peter, James and John when Jesus was transfigured before them. Moses and Elijah appeared with him. The vision showed that Jesus, the man the apostles had been following, with whom they shared their lives, was more than a wonderfully good man: he was none other than God's Beloved, on whom God's favour rested. God's command was: 'Listen to him!'

This Jesus, Son of God, was to suffer death for our sake, and to rise again for our sake. When we study the Old Testament, we see that every word of prophecy is fulfilled in him. In Jesus, the love of God has taken human form. Every single yearning of the human heart is known to him. Every human soul can find light and peace with him, for all eternity. That - no less - is what we Christians proclaim about Christ. This is the God and man we seek with fervour this Lent.

Collect

O GOD, who have commanded us to listen to your beloved Son, be pleased, we pray, to nourish us inwardly by your word, that, with spiritual sight made pure, we may rejoice to behold your glory...

Readings: Genesis 12:1-4. Psalm 32:4-5,18-20,22.

Response: May your love be upon us, O Lord, as we place all our hope in you. Timothy 1:8-10.

Gospel acclamation: Glory and praise to you, O Christ! From the bright cloud the Father's voice was heard: 'This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him.'

Gospel: Matthew 17:1-9.

Prayer over the Offerings

MAY this sacrifice, O Lord, we pray, cleanse us of our faults and sanctify your faithful in body and mind for the celebration of the paschal festivities...

Preface:

...for after he had told his disciples of his coming Death, on the holy mountain he manifested to them his glory, to show, even by the testimony of the law and the prophets, that the Passion leads to the glory of the Resurrection...

Prayer after Communion

AS we receive these glorious mysteries, we make thanksgiving to you, O Lord, for allowing us while still on earth, to be partakers even now, of the things of heaven...

Prayer over the People

BLESS your faithful, we pray, O Lord, with a blessing that endures for ever, and keep them faithful to the Gospel of your Only-Begotten Son, so that they may always desire, and at last, attain that glory whose beauty he showed in his own Body, to the amazement of his Apostles.

*15th March***3rd Sunday in Lent****Water and new life**

TODAY'S theme is water, symbol of life itself, and of cleansing and refreshment.

In the desert, the Jews cried out for water. Through Moses, God granted them what they wanted, but rebuked them for their lack of faith.

Today's Gospel reading is long. But we shouldn't miss a word. It tells of Jesus' encounter with a Samaritan woman at Jacob's Well.

It was remarkable, in an age when women were very much the 'lesser sex', that Jesus should talk at length to her. Remarkable, too, that he should talk with a Samaritan - people the Jews despised. But Jesus was open to everyone. His mission was to the whole world.

Jesus offered the woman 'living water'. Just as water is essential for human life, so the grace of God ('living water') is necessary for eternal life. The woman was fascinated by this man who offered her water that would quench her thirst once and for all. Jesus used her interest to reveal his divinity to her. Little by little, he showed that he knew about her life, her secrets, her conscience. Her conversion had begun. She asked about traditions of worship, which differed between Samaritans and Jews. Jesus told her that true worship comes from the heart, 'in spirit and in truth'. And he went on to tell her, explicitly, that he was the Messiah: 'I am he.'

This long Gospel reading merits careful reading, meditation and discussion. We, like the woman of Samaria, should be open to Christ's teaching, alert to respond, eager to tell others what we've learnt and what he now means to us.

See back page illustration

Collect

O GOD, author of every mercy and of all goodness, who in fasting, prayer and almsgiving, have shown us a remedy for sin, look graciously on this confession of our lowliness, that we, who are bowed down by our conscience, may always be lifted up by your mercy...

Readings: Exodus 17:3-7. Psalm 94:1-2,6-9. Response: O that today you would listen to his voice: 'Harden not your hearts.' Romans 3:1-2, 5-8.

Gospel acclamation: Glory to you, O Christ; you are the Word of God! Lord, you are really the saviour of the world; give me the living water, so that I may never get thirsty.

Gospel: John 4:5-42

Prayer over the Offerings

BE pleased, O Lord, with these sacrificial offerings, and grant that we, who beseech pardon for our own sins, may take

care to forgive our neighbour...

Preface

... for when he asked the Samaritan woman for water to drink, he had already created the gift of faith within her, and so ardently did he thirst for her faith, that he kindled in her the fire of divine love...

Prayer after Communion

AS we receive the pledge of things yet hidden in heaven and are nourished while still on earth with the Bread that comes from on high, we humbly entreat you, O Lord, that what is being brought about in us in mystery may come to true completion...

Prayer over the People

DIRECT, O Lord, we pray, the hearts of your faithful, and in your kindness grant your servants this grace: that, abiding in the love of you and their neighbour, they may fulfil the whole of your commands...

22nd March

4th Sunday in Lent

Enlightenment

TODAY'S Gospel, like last Sunday's, is longer than usual, and richly rewarding in what it teaches. Read it before you go to Mass, listen to what the priest has to say about it during Mass, and read it again after Mass.

The Gospel is about blindness - physical and spiritual - and our need of enlightenment. We pray that, like the man blind from birth, we may be enlightened.

In Jesus' day, the Jews believed that misfortune was the result of personal sin (Job 4:7-8). The cause of all mankind's ills is indeed sin: but this does not mean that every misfortune we suffer is caused by our own personal sin. The just man or woman may suffer. Think of Jesus' Mother, Mary.

Sometimes, suffering leads to cleansing, or is an exercise in virtue, or alerts us to the sufferings and needs of others, and the very sufferings of Christ.

Jesus cured the blind man in two stages: first, he put a paste on his eyes; then he told him to wash in the pool of Siloam. Jesus told the man that he was the light of the world; and as well as opening the man's eyes, he enlightened his soul.

The hitherto blind man received faith in Jesus as prophet and Son of God. But the man's friends and neighbours had their doubts. And the Pharisees, with their cold, formal attachment to the letter of the Law but not to its spirit, did not want to see, nor believe, despite the clear evidence before them. They repeated their old accusation that by healing on the Sabbath, Christ had broken the Law.

Christ taught that performing good works was compatible with observing the Sabbath, and that the good of others came before all the other commandments (Matthew 12:3-8).

Putting rules before justice and charity leads to fanaticism. The fanaticism of the Pharisees was shown in the dilemma they posed themselves: was Jesus a man of God, as his miracles implied? Or was he a sinner, because he did not keep the Sabbath?

By God's grace, we know the answer. Jesus was indeed a man of God; he was - and is - God incarnate. So, as St Paul exhorts us in today's second reading, let us live as children of the light - the light of Christ.

Collect

O GOD, who through your Word reconcile the human race to yourself in a wonderful way, grant, we pray, that with prompt devotion and eager faith, the Christian people may hasten towards the solemn celebration to come...

Readings: 1 Samuel 16:1,6-7,10-11. Psalm 22:1-6.

Response: The Lord is my shepherd. There is nothing I shall want. Ephesians 5:8-14.

Gospel acclamation: Glory to you, O Christ, you are the Word of God! I am the light of the world, says the Lord: anyone who follows me will have the light of life.

Gospel: John 9:1-41

Prayer over the Offerings

WE place before you with joy these offerings which bring eternal remedy, O Lord, praying that we may both faithfully revere them, and present them to you as fitting for the salvation of all the world...

Preface

...by the mystery of the Incarnation, he has led the human race that walked in darkness into the radiance of the faith, and has brought those born in slavery to ancient sin through the waters of regeneration to make them your adopted children...

Prayer after Communion

O GOD, who enlighten everyone who comes into this world, illuminate our hearts, we pray, with the splendour of your grace, that we may always ponder what is pleasing to your majesty, and love you in all sincerity...

Prayer over the People

LOOK upon those who call to you, O Lord, and sustain the weak; give life by your unfailing light to those who walk in the shadow of death, and bring those rescued by your mercy from every evil to reach the highest good...

29th March

5th Sunday of Lent

From today until the Easter Vigil it is traditional that crosses and pictures in church 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 is related only in the Gospel of John, as the last miracle performed by Jesus before his arrest and crucifixion.

The miracle took place in Bethany, three kilometres from Jerusalem (about the same distance as Mile Two from Banjul).

In the Gospel, several women are called Mary.

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

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 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...

Pope tells Curia to accept change

TO carry out the continuing reform of the Church requires a willingness to change and a commitment to personal conversion, said Pope Francis during his annual Christmas greeting on 21st December to the bishops and cardinals of the Roman Curia.

Francis quoted St John Henry Newman, who said, 'Here on earth to live is to change, and perfection is the result of many transformations.'

'For Newman, change was conversion, that is, an inner transformation,' said the Pope. 'Christian life is actually a journey, a pilgrimage.' The history of God's people, the history of the Church, he continued, 'has always been marked by departures, shifts, changes. The path, of course, is not purely geographical, but above all symbolic: it is an invitation to discover the movement of the heart which, paradoxically, needs to depart in order to remain, to change in order to be faithful.'

Pope Francis spoke to the cardinals and supervisors of the departments in the Roman Curia in the Clementine Hall. In the annual Christmas greeting the Pope gives his perspective on curial reform thus far, and his vision for the coming year.

He said reform as personal transformation 'has a particular value in our time, because that in which we are living is not simply an era of changes, but a change of era.' He explained that change, for the Church, is based on fidelity to the deposit of faith and to Tradition.

Reform is not built on nothing, he continued, but builds on the good work which has already been done in the 'complex history' of the curia.

Church structures must become 'more missionary'.

Quoting from his apostolic exhortation, 'Evangelii gaudium', Francis said that the aim of the current curial reform is that 'customs, styles, schedules, language and every ecclesial structure become an adequate channel for evangelisation in the current world, rather than for self-preservation. This is why, the Pope explained, it was decided to name the forthcoming apostolic constitution Praedicate evangelium ('Preach the Gospel.')

'Praedicate evangelium' is expected to be published during 2020. It will replace 'Pastor bonus', the apostolic constitution on the Roman Curia promulgated by Pope St John Paul II in 1988, and subsequently modified by both Pope Benedict and Pope Francis.

The world 'no longer Christian'

The Pope underlined that the world is no longer Christian. 'Today we are no longer the only ones who produce culture, neither the first nor the most listened to... We therefore need a change of pastoral mentality'.

'We are no longer in a regime of Christianity because faith – especially in Europe, but also in a large part of the West – no longer constitutes an obvious presupposition of common life, indeed it is often even denied, derided, marginalised and ridiculed.' The Pope warned against a rigid attitude stemming from a fear of change. 'There is always the temptation to fall back on the past... because it is more reassuring, known, and, certainly less confrontational; this too is part of the process and the risk of initiating significant changes.'

Reflecting on Christmas and the mystery of the Incarnation, Francis urged the cardinals and bishops not to forget that 'the Child lying in the crib has the face of our most needy brothers and sisters, of the poor.... Christmas is the feast of God's love for us. The divine love that inspires, directs and corrects change and defeats the human fear of leaving the "safe" to relaunch us in the "mystery".'

The Pope said that St John Henry Newman pointed out that Christmas, 'should find us more and more like him who in this time has become a child for our sake; that every new Christmas finds us simpler, more humble, holier, more charitable, more resigned, happier, fuller of God.'



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Ash Wednesday:

'A handful of dust'

IN the West, the most common method of disposing of the dead is cremation. In the fierce flames of the oven, a corpse is soon reduced to ashes. It's a sobering thought. As the poet T.S. Eliot wrote, 'I will show you fear in a handful of dust.'

The commercial value of a human body is negligible. We are just water and a few chemicals and minerals. Dead, our dust is worth even less. But as a creation of God, with an immortal soul, each of us is infinitely precious.

At the same time, our mortal life is finite. Whatever we think of this life - its joys, its sorrows, its triumphs, its disappointments, its comforts, its frustrations - it is certain that each one of us is going to die.

On Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, worshippers' foreheads are marked with ashes.

As he imprints the ashes on each penitent, the priest may say, 'Remember that you are dust, and to dust you will return.'

The attitude of the atheist and the agnostic may be, 'Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die.' But the Christian, too, lives each day as though it was his or her last. The Christian should make the most of every day, thanking God for his blessings and endeavouring to serve others.

Lent can usefully remind us that this life is a pilgrimage, a journey towards God.

The journey

Just as the ancient Hebrews journeyed for 40 years through the wilderness towards the Promised Land, so Christians spend 40 days preparing for Easter: the great feast of Eternal Life, the Day of Resurrection.

The whole of life - not just Lent - is a journey towards our death and resurrection. Thus, the body of a deceased person may be buried with the assertion, 'earth to earth, dust to dust, in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life.'

St Paul, even after his conversion, experienced struggle and suffering. But he was adamant: 'I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things past, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.' (Romans 8:8).

We accept the marking of ashes on our foreheads on Ash Wednesday as an intimation of our mortality. But the ashes are also a remembrance that we are sinners who do not sufficiently recognise each day as a precious gift of God, with heaven as our goal.

So we should use the Lenten season to become more faithful pilgrims.

Sunday and weekday readings at Mass during Lent

The Sunday and weekday readings at Mass during Lent have been carefully chosen to help us prepare for Easter.

Sundays

- 1 The **Gospel** proclaimed each Sunday is the key reading.
- 2 The **Old Testament** readings have been chosen to harmonise with the Gospel.
- 3 The **Psalms** have been chosen to provide a prayerful response to the Old Testament readings.
- 4 The **Epistle** readings have been chosen 'to fit the Gospel and Old Testament readings... and provide a connection between them'.

This is the 'Year of St Luke', and five of the six Sunday Gospel readings come from Luke.

The First Sunday's reading concerns Christ's temptation in the wilderness, and the Second Sunday his transfiguration.

On the Third Sunday, we hear of Christ's call to repentance, illustrated by the parable of the fig tree.

The Gospel readings on the two following Sundays concern forgiveness, exemplified by the parable of the prodigal son (Fourth Sunday) and Christ's forgiveness of the woman taken in adultery. The Gospel on the Fifth Sunday is a narrative, not from St Luke, but from St John.

Weekdays

The Gospel readings on the weekdays of Lent relate to the themes of this holy season, and the Old Testament readings have been chosen to relate to the Gospel.

It is an excellent Lenten practice to take part in the weekday Mass as often as you can. If for good reason you cannot attend Mass, you should read the readings for each day for yourself. *They are printed on page 24.*

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



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

Lent: challenges and opportunities

'LENT' is a short word for the second-longest season in the Church's calendar (the longest being Easter Time).

Beginning on February 26th, Lent lies before us once again, with all its challenges and opportunities.

The prime challenge is to take our Christian faith more seriously. The prime opportunity is to celebrate Easter with greater joy than ever.

During the roughly forty days of Lent, we are asked to fast (but only on two days). We are also asked to abstain from certain pleasures or foods, or to engage in good works and works of piety.

These 'Lenten obligations' are not onerous. But they should be only the beginning. We should look into our hearts and consciences, which for most people is a much more demanding and even painful exercise.

We need to ask some searching questions, seeking honest answers.

* Where do we stand in relation to our beliefs and practices?
* How far do we understand our faith in Christ and practise it?

* How closely do we work with other members of the Church to witness to Christ?

It is in the answers to such questions that each of us can determine the best way to observe Lent - the way that will truly point us to Easter.

What are my Lenten obligations?

Throughout Lent, every Catholic is obliged to perform personal penance. The obligation may be fulfilled in one or more of the following ways:

- by abstaining from meat or some other food;
- by abstaining from alcoholic drink, smoking or some other form of amusement;
- by offering family prayers, going to weekday Mass, visiting the Blessed Sacrament or making the Stations of the Cross;
- by going out of one's way to help someone who is poor, sick, old or lonely.

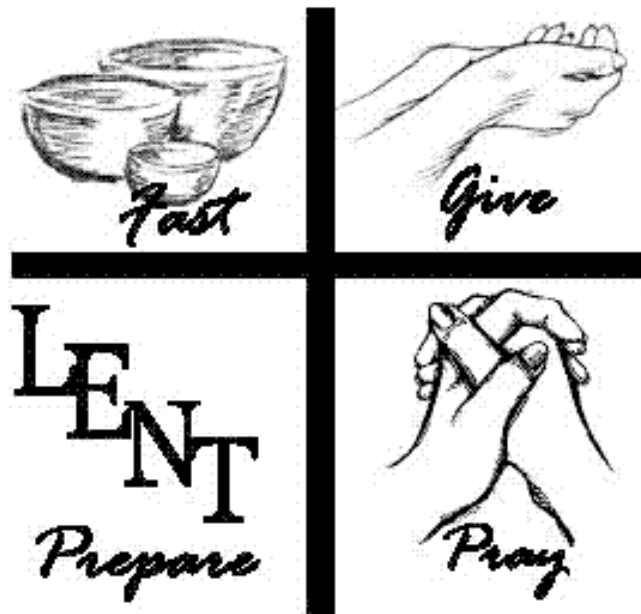
Each individual is free to choose the way of doing penance, which may be changed from day to day.

Fasting and abstinence

Ash Wednesday (26th February) and **Good Friday** (10th April) are days of fasting and abstinence.

It is recommended that the fast of Good Friday be continued the following day (Holy Saturday) until the Easter Vigil.

Fasting means that the amount of food we eat is drastically reduced. Abstinence means abstaining from meat or



performing an act of charity. Those over the age of 18 are bound by the rule of fasting until they reach their 60th year. All over the age of 14 are bound by the rule of abstinence.

Every Friday, because it recalls the Crucifixion, is a day of abstinence.

The day before Lent is sometimes called Shrove Tuesday, from the practice of hearing confessions and the granting of absolution (or shriving). It is still sometimes called 'Pancake Day', because eggs were used up on this day in the making of pancakes.

In some places, days before Lent are celebrated as Carnival ('carnival' means 'farewell to meat') or **Mardi Gras** (Fat Tuesday), when fatty foods formerly forbidden in Lent were used up.

The colour for Lent (as for Advent) is purple. On the fourth Sunday in Lent rose-coloured vestments may be worn.

Throughout Lent, the exclamation of praise, *Alleluia!* is omitted.

The *Gloria in Excelsis* is not used on Sundays in Lent, but it is used on the feasts of St Joseph (Friday, 19th March) and the Annunciation (Wednesday, 25th March), and on Holy Thursday (13th April).

In Lent, by tradition, flowers are not used in church to decorate altars and shrines. The organ is played, if at all, only to sustain singing. Other musical instruments are not used.

The purpose of 'no flowers, no musical instruments' is to emphasise the penitential aspect of Lent, and to ensure that when Easter comes, there is an outburst of colour and joyous music.

*Darkness cannot drive out darkness. Only light can do that.
Hate cannot drive out hate. Only love can do that.*

Martin Luther King

Making your confessions

LENT concentrates our thoughts on our need to love God more faithfully, and we turn for grace to the Sacrament of Reconciliation - otherwise known as Penance, or Confession.

It's a good idea to examine your conscience every day.

Try to go to Confession regularly. Going to Confession once a month is good practice. Even if you are not aware of any serious sins, you will receive God's grace and strength every time you go.

We should confess any mortal sins, as soon as possible. A mortal sin is an offence against God made deliberately, knowing it to be wrong. (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1857)

'Each of the faithful is bound by obligation, faithfully, to confess serious sins at least once a year.' (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1457)

'When he celebrates the Sacrament of Penance, the priest exercises the ministry of the Good Shepherd in search of the lost sheep, the Good Samaritan healing the wounds, the Father waiting to welcome back the prodigal son, the Just Judge whose judgment is just and merciful at the same time.'

(*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1465)

A prayer before Confession

LORD Jesus, open my mind and my heart to your Holy Spirit. Help me to remember my sins, to be sorry for them, and to try hard never to sin again.

A simple examination of conscience

Jesus says: 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart.'

- Have I been loyal to Jesus and his Church?
- Have I betrayed my faith, or put it at risk?
- Am I faithful in daily prayer?
- Have I put my trust in superstitions?
- Have I cursed, sworn, or broken my word?
- Have I missed Mass on any Sunday or Holyday of Obligation through my own fault?
- Have I fulfilled my Easter duties (going to Confession

and Communion during the Easter period?)

Jesus says, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.'

- Have I respected my parents and those in authority?
- Have I been angry, hateful or proud to others?
- Have I neglected my family responsibilities?
- Have I been drunk, or been greedy or lazy?
- Have I been impure in thought, word, looks or action?
- Have I cheated, stolen, or gambled beyond my means?
- Have I told lies to excuse myself or injure others?

If it has been a long time since your last Confession, or if you are not sure what to say, ask the priest to guide you. He will be happy to help.

Making your Confession

You begin by saying:

BLESS me, Father, for I have sinned.

It is a week (*month, or however long you think it has been*) since my last Confession.

Then tell the priest all the things you are sorry for:

When you have finished, you may say:

I am very sorry for these sins and all the sins of my past life.

The priest may then give you some brief words of advice.

He will give you your penance (some prayers to say or some action to do, to say that you are sorry).

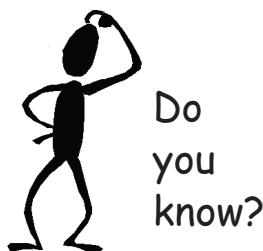
He will then ask you to say the Act of Contrition:

O my God, because you are so good, I am sorry that I have sinned against you, and by the help of your grace, I will not sin again.

The priest then gives you absolution:

GOD, the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of his Son, has reconciled the world, and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins.

Through the ministry of the Church, may God give you pardon and peace; and I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen



1. How many dioceses are there in Senegal?
2. Which saint is known as 'the Little Flower'?
3. Who was the mighty champion of the Philistines, beaten by the 'boy' David?
4. Which country has the world's largest Muslim population?

Answers on page 25

'Let us empty Purgatory with our prayers'.

Padre Pio

The Way of the Cross

DURING Lent most parishes arrange for the Stations of the Cross to be performed every Friday. The Stations are well-attended on the first Friday, but numbers fall off as Lent progresses: surprisingly, because one might suppose that as Good Friday approaches, devotion to our suffering Lord would intensify.

THE STATIONS of the Cross are pictures, carvings or statues depicting Christ carrying his cross to his crucifixion. They are placed round the inside walls of a church or along a road leading to a church or shrine.

The stations may be followed by individuals or groups at any time, but especially on Fridays, and during Lent.

The stations consist of fourteen wooden crosses (pictures alone do not suffice), blessed by someone with the authority to erect stations.

The Stations as traditionally performed

1. Jesus is condemned to death
2. Jesus carries his cross
3. Jesus falls the first time
4. Jesus meets his mother
5. Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry the cross
6. Veronica wipes the face of Jesus
7. Jesus falls the second time
8. Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem
9. Jesus falls the third time
10. Jesus is stripped of his garments
11. Jesus is nailed to the cross
12. Jesus dies on the cross
13. Jesus is taken down from the cross
14. Jesus is laid in the tomb

Customary prayers

The devotion begins with an Act of Contrition:

O MY God, because you are so good, I am very sorry that I have sinned against you, and by the help of your grace I will not sin again.

Before each station:

V We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you
Adoremus te, Christe. Et benedicimus tibi

R Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world
Quia per sanctam crucem tuam redemisti mundum

After meditation at each station:

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be to the Father.

V Have mercy on us, O Lord
Miserere nostri, Domine

R Have mercy
Miserere nostri

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen

Fidelium animae, per misericordiam Dei, requiescant in pace. Amen.

On the way to the next station, a verse of a hymn, eg, the

Stabat Mater, is customarily sung.

After the 14th Station:

LET us pray.

GOD, who by the Precious Blood of thine Only-Begotten Son didst sanctify the Standard of the Cross, grant, we beseech thee, that we who rejoice in the glory of the same holy Cross may at all times and places rejoice in thy protection.

Through the same Christ our Lord...

End with the Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory be for the Pope's intentions.

The Scriptural Way of the Cross

Of the 14 traditional stations, only eight have clear scriptural foundation. Stations 3, 4, 6, 7 and 9 are not specifically attested to in the Gospels.

In particular, Station 6 (Veronica) was not known before mediæval times. Station 13 (Jesus' body being taken down and laid in his mother's arms) embellishes the Gospel, which simply says that Joseph of Arimathea took Jesus down from the cross and entombed him.

On Good Friday, 1991 Pope John Paul II introduced a form of the Stations which he called the 'Scriptural Way of the Cross', more closely aligned with Biblical accounts. He celebrated this form many times. In 2007, Pope Benedict XVI approved St John Paul's alternative stations for meditation and public celebration.

1. Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane
2. Jesus is betrayed by Judas and arrested
3. Jesus is condemned by the Sanhedrin
4. Jesus is denied by Peter
5. Jesus is judged by Pilate
6. Jesus is scourged and crowned with thorns
7. Jesus takes up his cross
8. Jesus is helped by Simon to carry his cross
9. Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem
10. Jesus is crucified
11. Jesus promises his kingdom to the repentant thief
12. Jesus entrusts Mary and John to each other
13. Jesus dies on the cross
14. Jesus is laid in the tomb

The origin of the Stations

THE WAY of the Cross was fostered by the Franciscans, guardians of the Holy Places in Jerusalem, to recall the way followed by Jesus to his crucifixion.

In the 15th century, the Franciscans began to build stations in Europe like those in the Holy Land. In 1686, Innocent XI granted the Franciscans the right to erect stations in their churches. In 1731, Pope Clement XII decreed that all churches could have the stations, provided that a Franciscan erected them with the consent of the local bishop. The number of stations was fixed at fourteen. In 1857, the bishops of England were given the right to erect the stations without the intervention of a Franciscan, and in 1862, this right was extended to bishops everywhere.

Some weekday celebrations - February & March

Thursday, 6th February: St Paul Miki & his companion martyrs

PAUL Miki was born around 1562, educated by Jesuits, then joined the Society of Jesus. The Japanese government feared the influence of the Jesuits. Miki and others were imprisoned. He and fellow Catholic prisoners were forced to walk 966 kilometres from Kyoto to Nagasaki, the city with the most Christian converts. There, on 5th February 1597, Miki was crucified. From the cross, he assured his executioners that he forgave them. Alongside Paul Miki died two other Jesuits, and 23 others, known collectively as the Twenty-Six Martyrs of Japan, canonised by Pope Pius IX in 1862.

(In 1945, the Second World War was brought to a close when the USA dropped a nuclear bomb on Nagasaki.)

Saturday, 8th February: St Josephine Bakhita, religious

JOSEPHINE was born around 1869 in Darfur in Sudan. At the age of nine, she was kidnapped. Working as a slave for the mother of a general, she was flogged every day, and bore 144 scars throughout her life. In 1882, she was bought by the Italian consul, who took her to Italy. Bakhita came to know a totally different kind of 'master': Jesus Christ. 'I am definitively loved, and whatever happens to me, I am awaited by this Love.' In January 1890, she was baptised and confirmed and received her first Communion. In December 1896, she took vows in the Canossian Sisters, and thereafter, journeyed round Italy to promote the missions. She died in 1947, and was canonised in 2000.

Tuesday, 11th February: Our Lady of Lourdes

IN 1858, the Immaculate Virgin Mary appeared to Bernadette Soubirous near Lourdes in France. Through this poor girl, Mary called sinners to repentance, and there arose in the Church a marvellous spirit of prayer and charity, especially in helping the poor and the sick. This day is observed as World Day for the Sick.

Saturday, 22nd February: The Chair of St Peter

THE FEAST of the Chair of St Peter has been kept in Rome since the 4th century. It invites us to give thanks for our unity with the Pope and with Catholics throughout the world, and to pray for the preservation and strengthening of this unity.

Tuesday, 17th March: St Patrick, bishop

PATRICK was born in Wales in the 390s. He was taken as a slave to Ireland, but after six years, escaped to Gaul (present-day France). Having been ordained, he returned to Ireland, founding the Diocese of Armagh and spending the rest of his life preaching the Christian faith. He is the principal patron of Ireland.

Thursday, 19th March: St Joseph

JOSEPH was the husband of the Virgin Mary, with whom he lived in chastity. He was descended from the House of David (Matthew 1:15; Luke 2:14). Joseph is described in many English translations of the Bible as a carpenter, though the original Greek calls him a teckton (craftsman). Because the family could only offer two doves at the presentation of the Child Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2: 22-39), Joseph is thought of as a poor man. He is revered as a model of poverty, chastity and obedience, patron of priests and religious, and as a model father and artisan.

Thursday, 25th March: The Annunciation of the Lord

ST LUKE'S account of the angel Gabriel's visit to Mary (Luke 1:26-38) and her acceptance of God's role for her, 'Be it done unto me according to your word,' is unforgettable. Mary's acceptance was the prelude to Christ's birth, ministry, passion and resurrection. It prefigured Christ's own acceptance of the Father's will in the 'agony in the garden' (Luke 22:39-44).

We pray especially for Bishop Emeritus Michael Cleary CSSp, episcopally ordained on this day in 1981 as Bishop of Banjul, and now living in retirement in Ireland.

The Diocesan Prayer



GOD our Father, renew by the light of the Gospel, the Church in the Diocese of Banjul. Strengthen the bonds of unity between the faithful, the religious, the priests and the Bishop, so that together, your chosen people may shine forth as a sign of unity and peace, in a world torn by discord and strife.

Bless and sustain all our efforts to establish a dynamic, self-reliant Church. Open our eyes and ears to the needs of all, and especially of our own brothers and sisters in Christ, who are less fortunate than others, so that in a spirit of solidarity and compassion, we may faithfully proclaim the good news of salvation and advance together on the way to your Kingdom.

Through Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen

Daily Mass Readings

February & March

Sunday readings Year A Weekday readings Year 2

Memorials in brackets are optional.

Feb 1 Sat:	2 Samuel 12:1-7,16-17. Psalm 50. Mark 4:35-41 (BVM)	
Sun 2nd	Malachi 3:1-4. Psalm 23:7-10. Hebrews 2:14-18. Luke 2:22-40.	PRESENTATION of THE LORD
Mon 3rd	2 Samuel 15:13-14,30;16:5-13. Psalm 3. Mark 5:1-20.	(St Blaise or St Ansgar)
Tue 4th	2 Samuel 18:9-10,14,24-25,30 – 19:10. Psalm 85. Mark 5:21-43.	
Wed 5th	2 Samuel 24:2,9-17. Psalm 31. Mark 6:1-6.	St Agatha
Thu 6th	1 Kings 2:1-4,10-12. Psalm 1 Chronicles 29:10-12. Mark 6:7-13.	St Paul Miki
Fri 7th	Sirach 47:2-11. Psalm 17. Mark 6:14-29 abstinence	
Sat 8th	1 Kings 3:4-13. Psalm 118. Mark 6:30-34.	(St Jerome Emiliani <i>or</i> St Josephine Bakhita <i>or</i> BVM)
Sun 9th	Isaiah 58:7-10. Psalm 111:4-9. 1 Corinthians 2:1-5. Matthew 5:13-16.	5th SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME
Mon 10th	1 Kings 8:1-7,9-13. Psalm 131. Mark 6:53-56.	St Scholastica
Tue 11th	1 Kings 8: 22-23,27-30. Psalm 83. Mark 7:1-13.	Our Lady of Lourdes
Wed 12th	1 Kings 10:1-10. Psalm 36. Mark 7:14-23	
Thu 13th	1 Kings 11:4-13. Psalm 105. Mark 7:24-30.	
Fri 14th	1 Kings 29-32; 12:19. Psalm 80. Mark 7:31-37.	St Cyril & St Methodius
Sat 15th	1 Kings 12:26-32; 13:33-34. Psalm 105. Mark 8:1-10.	(BVM)
Sun 16th	Sirach 15:16-20. Psalm 118:1-2,4-5,17-18,33-34. 1 Corinthians 2:6-10. Matthew 5:17-37. 6th SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME	Seven Founders of the Order of Servites
Mon 17th	James 1:1-11. Psalm 118. Mark 8:11-13.	
Tue 18th	James 1:12-18. Psalm 93. Mark 8:14-21.	
Wed 19th	James 1:19-27. Psalm 14. Mark 8:22-26.	
Thu 20th	James 2:1-9. Psalm 33. Mark 8:27-33.	
Fri 21st	James 2:13:14-24,26. Psalm 111. Mark 8:34 – 9:1.	St Peter Damian abstinence
Sat 22nd	1 Peter 5:1-4. Psalm 22. Matthew 16:13-19	The CHAIR of St PETER
Sun 23rd	Leviticus 1-2,17-18. Psalm 102:1-4,8,10,12-13. 1 Corinthians 3:16-23. Matthew 5:38-48. 7th SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME	
Mon 24th	James 3:13-18. Psalm 18. Mark 9:14-29	
Tue 25th	James 4:1-10. Psalm 54. Mark 9:30-37.	
	Ordinary Time ends; Lent begins	
Wed 26th	Joel 2:12-18. Psalm 50:3-6,12-14,17. 2 Corinthians 5:20 - 6:2. Matthew 6:1-6,16-18. ASH WEDNESDAY	
Thu 27th	Deuteronomy 30:15-20. Psalm 1. Luke 9:22-25	
Fri 28th	Isaiah 58:1-9. Psalm 50. Matthew 9:14-15.	
Sat 29th	Isaiah 58:9-14. Psalm 85. Luke 5:27-32.	
Sun 1st:	Genesis 2:7-9;3:1-7. Psalm 50:3-6,12-14,17. Romans 5:12-10. Matthew 4:1-11. 1st SUNDAY in LENT	
Mon 2nd	Leviticus 19:1-2,11-18. Psalm 18. Matthew 25:31-46.	
Tue 3rd	Isaiah 55:10-11. Psalm 33. Matthew 6:7-15.	
Wed 4th	Jonah 3:1-10. Psalm 50. Luke 11:29-32	[St Casimir]
Thu 5th	Esther 4:17. Psalm 137. Matthew 7:7-12.	
Fri 6th	Ezekiel 18:21-28. Psalm 129. Matthew 5:20-26.	
Sat 7th	Deuteronomy 26:16-19. Psalm 118. Matthew 5:43-48.	[St Perpetua & St Felicity]
Sun 8th	Genesis 12:1-4. Psalm 32:4-5,18-20,22. 2 Timothy 1:8-10. Matthew 17:1-9. 2nd SUNDAY in LENT	[St Frances of Rome]
Mon 9th	Daniel 9:4-10. Psalm 78. Luke 6:36-38.	
Tue 10th	Isaiah 1:10,16-20. Psalm 49. Matthew 23:1-12	
Wed 11th	Jeremiah 18:18-20. Psalm 30. Matthew 20:17-28.	
Thu 12th	Jeremiah 17:5-10. Psalm 1. Luke 16:19-31.	
Fri 13th	Genesis 37:34,12-13,17-28. Psalm 104. Matthew 21:33-43,45-46.	
Sat 14th	Micah 7:14-15,18-20. Psalm 102. Luke 15:1-3,11-32.	
Sun 15th	Exodus 17:3-7. Psalm 94:1-2,6-9. Romans 5: 1-2,5-8. Matthew 4:5-42. 3rd SUNDAY in LENT	
Mon 16th	2 Kings 5:1-15. Psalms 41,42. Luke 4:24-30.	
Tue 17th	Daniel 3:25,34-43. Psalm 24. Matthew 18:21-35	[St Patrick]
Wed 18th	Deuteronomy 4:1,5-9. Psalm 147. Matthew 5:17-19.	[St Cyril of Jerusalem]
Thu 19th	2 Samuel 7:4-5,12-14. Psalm 88:2-5,27,29. Romans 4:13,15-18,22. Matthew 1:16,18-21,24 or Luke 2:41-51. St JOSEPH	
Fri 20th	Hosea 14:2-10. Psalm 80. Mark 12:28-34.	
Sat 21st	Hosea 5:15 – 6:6. Psalm 50. Luke 18:9-14.	
Sun 22nd	1 Samuel 16:1,6-7,10-13. Psalm 22. Ephesians 5:8-14. John 9:1-41	4th SUNDAY in LENT
Mon 23rd	Isaiah 65:17-21. Psalm 29. John 4:43-54.	[St Toribio de Mogrovejo]

Tue 24th	Ezekiel 47:1-9,12. Psalm 45. John 5:1-3,5-16.	
Wed 25th	Isaiah 7:10-14; 8:10. Psalm 39:7-11. Hebrews 10:4-10. Luke 1:26-39.	ANNUNCIATION of THE LORD
Thu 26th	Exodus 32:7-14. Psalm 105. John 5:31-47.	
Fri 27th	Wisdom 2:1,12-22. Psalm 33. John 7:1-2,10,25-30.	
Sat 28th	Jeremiah 11:18-20. Psalm 7. John 7:40-52.	
Sun 29th	Ezekiel 37:12-14. Psalm 129. Romans 8:8-11. John 11:1-45.	5th SUNDAY in LENT
Mon 30th	Daniel 13:1-9,15-17,19-30,33-62 (or 13:41-62). Psalm 22. John 8:1-11.	
Tue 31st	Numbers 21:4-9. Psalm 101. John 8:21-30.	



Fee moi Gambia

Newman, new fashions

IN OCTOBER, Pope Francis canonised a 19th-century Englishman: Cardinal John Henry Newman. You might be surprised that there is a connection between Newman and the Anglican Diocese of Gambia.

When Newman was young, worship in the Church of England was formal, with little music and scant ceremony. But there was, for those who cared, the beauty of the Book of Common Prayer, which some say is composed in incomparably sonorous English. As an Anglican priest, Newman felt that the Church of England needed a 'Second Reformation' to rediscover its Catholic roots. He and like-minded colleagues became leaders of the immensely-influential 'Oxford Movement'.

In time, Newman converted to Roman Catholicism, together with a good many of his followers. But the Oxford Movement continued, amid considerable controversy. 'High-church' Anglicans began to mould their liturgy and their sanctuaries on the Roman model.

Today, Anglo-Catholicism's 'glory days' seem to be over. But its congregations seem 'more Roman than Rome' with ceremonial reminiscent of Roman Catholic services before Vatican II. Other, more mainstream, Anglican churches use vestments, votive candles and other Catholic accoutrements, as a matter of course. If it weren't for Newman and his successors, Anglican worship might still be more Protestant in flavour.



Not in the know

HAVING suffered a sudden collapse, a friend's brother recently went to hospital. Fortunately, his condition was not critical, and he was given medicine - or rather, told to buy medicine. But no-one, either at the hospital or the pharmacy, told him what the medicine was for, nor how to take it.

Some medicines are actually dangerous unless they are taken according to instructions. But what do you do if you are not informed?

Of course, you should ask. But is it not the duty of doctors, nurses and pharmacists to make sure that patients are clearly told what they are apparently suffering from, and what the treatment should be?

And why do most doctors and pharmacists so often prescribe medicines in threes - 'Take this, and this, and this'?

If my doctor tells me to take three medicines, I ask 'Why do I need three? What is each medicine called, and what is it for?'

Divided attention

The benefits of the 'high-tech age' are tremendous. Many of us may not - yet - use the internet, or chatter away using a smart phone. But we can readily communicate with each other using the mobile telephone.

Simple mobiles are now so modestly priced that most people who want one can buy one (or get someone to give them one).

But there's a down-side. I know several people who, while in conversation with others, fidget with their phones. This is downright rude.

If you're talking to someone, look at them, give them your full attention. Don't act as though your phone is more important than the person you're talking to.

And if you have a phone call while you're with friends, tell the person who's calling you to call back later.

Answers to 'Do you know?' page 21

1. Seven: Dakar (Archdiocese); Kaolack; Kolda; Saint-Louis du Sénégal; Tambacounda; Thiès; Ziguinchor.
2. 'The Little Flower' is St Therese of Lisieux - the town in France in which she was born. Therese is also known as 'St Therese of the Child Jesus', which was her name as a religious sister.
3. Goliath. See 1 Samuel 17.
4. Indonesia has the largest Muslim population in the world, with approximately 225 million Muslims - about 87 per cent of the population. Almost all are Sunni Muslims, with about one million Shi'a.



Matthew's inspired account of the Son of David

THE READINGS at Sunday Mass are arranged in a three-year cycle: A, B and C.

From Advent 2019 to Christ the King 2020, most of the Sunday Gospels come from Year A - popularly known as the Year of Matthew, because almost all the Gospel readings come from the Gospel of St Matthew.

THE EARLIEST Christian communities looked upon the books of the Old Testament as Sacred Scripture, and read them at their religious assemblies. The Gospels, which contained the words of Christ and the narrative of his life, soon enjoyed the same authority as the Old Testament. A book was acknowledged as 'canonical' when the Church regarded it as apostolic, and had it read at assemblies.

By the middle of the 3rd century, St Matthew's Gospel was received by the church as a canonical, divinely-inspired document.

Matthew's Gospel is the first book in the New Testament; but it was not the first to be written. The letters of Paul the Apostle, come before any of the Gospels. Then came the Gospel of Mark.

Scholars agree that the author of Matthew's Gospel copied some of his material from Mark, as well as adding some from elsewhere. The Gospel may have been named after Matthew, the disciple of Jesus, in order to stress its importance to the early Church.

The first three books of the New Testament are called the Synoptic Gospels. The Greek word *synoptic* means 'seeing together'; that is, if we put Matthew, Mark and Luke side by side, we see a common pattern in their telling the story of Jesus. Matthew, Mark and Luke differ in many ways, but words, phrases and even whole passages, are at times practically identical in all three. It can be shown that it was Matthew and Luke who took material from Mark.

Matthew copies from Mark for about half his Gospel. But

there are incidents and teaching found only in Matthew: for example, the visit of the wise men (2:1-12) and the parable of the sheep and goats (25:31-46).

Matthew likes to present things in threes, fives and sevens. There are three temptations, three healings (the leper, the centurion's servant, Peter's mother-in-law), and three denials by Peter. In Matthew 5:21-48 we read five times, 'You have heard that it was said... but I say to you.' In Matthew 23:13-36 there are seven 'Woes' spoken against the scribes and Pharisees.

Jesus, fulfilment of ancient prophecies

Matthew's Gospel is not just a collection of stories about Jesus. It is put together with great care.

Matthew's main purpose is to portray Jesus as the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies. His Gospel begins with the table of Jesus' ancestry. Twelve times over he says, 'that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled', followed by a 'proof text' from the Old Testament. Another Jewish touch is Matthew's concern to refer to Jesus as the 'Son of David'.

Matthew's is an instructive Gospel, proclaiming Jesus' teaching on the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew is also concerned with the orderly life and discipline of the Church. Indeed, this is the only Gospel in which the word 'church' is found (16:18 and 18:17). Matthew deals not only with the charge to Peter as the foundation of Christ's Church, but also with such matters as divorce, almsgiving, fasting and prayer.

Matthew's Gospel was written for a community of Jewish-Christians, possibly at Antioch in Syria, who thought of themselves as the 'new Israel of God'. It was composed after the age of the first apostles, when the Church was taking shape in the great cities of the Roman Empire, possibly about the year AD 85.

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Seasonal Malaria Chemoprevention (SMC) Campaign in CRR & URR in 2017

CRS, in partnership with the National Malaria Control Programme (NMCP) of the Ministry of Health, have been implementing SMC strategy targeting children (3 – 59 months) in Upper and Central River regions from 2014 to 2016 supported by UNITAID ACCESS-SMC project. In 2017, with the



support of Global Fund, this high-impact intervention is being implemented again in the two regions to prevent children from getting malaria. The two regions have been identified due to their relatively high malaria transmission.

SMC is achieved by administering antimalarial medicines (*sulfadoxine-pyrimethamine* (SP) and *amodiaquine* (AQ)) up to four monthly doses to children. It is administered during the peak of the rainy season (August – December) when the incidence of malaria is high. In total, an estimated 90,925 children are targeted through door-to-door strategy to administer the antimalarial medicine.

Information Communication for Development (ICT4D) through use of android devices to enhance data collection, management and rapid analysis for effective decision-making. Despite challenging conditions in accessing communities during the rains, The Gambia is able to consistently reach over 80 per cent of the children targeted since the inception of the project. This is largely due to the commitment, perseverance and hard work of the health staff and volunteers and strong collaboration between the NMCP with CRS.



The woman at the well

Jesus came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink.' (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, 'How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?' (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, "Give me a drink," you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water...

'Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.'

...The woman said to him, 'I know that a Messiah is coming, who is called Christ. When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.'

Jesus said to her, 'I am he, the one who is speaking to you.'

John 4:5-10,13-14,25-26

Extracts from the Gospel for the 3rd Sunday of Lent, 22nd March

Our illustration is a painting (about 1640) by Giovanni Francesco Guercino, Italian artist, in the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid.

