



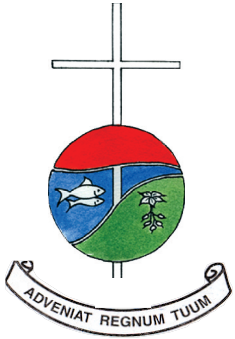
Many happy returns!
Bishop Emeritus Michael Cleary
celebrates his 90th birthday



Volume 39 No 5

OCTOBER / NOVEMBER 2015

D50



The Diocese of Banjul NEWSLETTER

Incorporating The Catholic Newsletter



The Church & the Family

Synod in Rome
4th-25th October



- every day
- fairly often
- occasionally
- never



How often do you pray the rosary?



Remembering the Faithful Departed



embrace the digital explosion with speed



EXPERIENCE THE DIFFERENCE



Your National 3G Operator

YAAY BOROM

www.gamcel.gm

By way of introduction

Challenge and opportunity



IN essence, the Christian message is the same every Sunday and every day of the year. But various seasons and feasts draw our attention to particular aspects of faith and practice.

October begins with the commemoration of St Therese, patron of our largest parish. Then, on 7th October, comes Our Lady of the Rosary – in honour of whom a church in Lamin is named. And there is an emphasis on the rosary throughout the month of October. Those who don't yet know how to say the rosary, or who have neglected it, should turn to page 9.

November begins with two contrasting commemorations. First comes All Saints – always a holy day of obligation. The saints are the souls whose stalwart faith and witness to the Way, the Truth and the Life has led them beyond death to the eternal vision of God in glory. Our friendship with them nourishes our hope that, by Our Lord's grace, we shall in due time enjoy their companionship in the heavenly realms.

The very day after All Saints comes All Souls - its full title being the Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed. As Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI reminds us on page 19, the majority of people are neither very good nor very bad, but somewhere in-between. They are open to love and to God, but they compromise with evil. We believe that such souls, now in purgatory, benefit from our prayers. In fact, one of the

marks of a Catholic is that every day, in prayer, he or she remembers the departed: those who in this life were family and friends; and indeed all others.

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and may light perpetual shine upon them.

There is also so much to pray for among the living. Our children and young people, for example, have recently started school again. We pray that they and their teachers may pursue knowledge and enlightenment (not just exam techniques).

And throughout the world there are 'trouble spots' - some in Africa - where intolerance and greed are causing distress, displacement and even death. Never should we think that such people and places are beyond praying for.

Moreover, we should not neglect prayer and good deeds in respect of our neighbour. As Christ confirms: 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself' (Luke 10:25-28 and Deuteronomy 6:4)

Yes: our Christian faith and our Christian responsibilities challenge us and present us with wonderful opportunities, every single day!

A risk worth
taking?
Migrants'
motivation, hopes
and fears
page 30



Cleaning your
refrigerator
page 13

IN THIS ISSUE

- 4 The Synod on the Family
- 5 Here & there: *Bishop Cleary's 90th birthday*
- 9 How to say the rosary
- 11 *Fee moi Gambia*
- 12 Family circle: *diabetes; Saying grace before meals*
- 14 Sunday Reflections: *27th Sunday to Christ the King*
- 18 Question Box: *Should we consult the stars?*
- 19 Standing before the Judge: *Pope Benedict on purgatory*
- 20 Christian anniversaries: *Fr John Meehan*
- 21 Pious Practices: *the use of holy water*
- 22 From beyond: *Christians and Muslims in Mali*
- 24 Mary, sign of hope and comfort: *Bishop Robert Ellison*
- 25 St Mary Major in Rome; Remembering Sister Benigna;
Do you know? *quiz*
- 27 Daily Mass readings, October & November
- 28 Weekday celebrations: *St Therese, St John Paul II*
- 30 End piece: *Suffering and hope; Fr A.E. Orobator SJ*
- 32 The poor widow: *Gospel reading & illustration*



Diocese of Banjul NEWSLETTER
Incorporating The Catholic Newsletter
OCTOBER / NOVEMBER 2015 Volume 39 No. 5
Published by The Gambia Pastoral Institute
33 Kairaba Avenue
PMB 296 Serrekunda, The Gambia, West Africa
Telephone 4394847 Email info@gpi.gm
Editor *Fr Peter S. Lopez* Editorial Consultant *David Somers*
Layout *Betty Quacoo*
Production *Monday Tofe, Henry Gomez, Frédéric Diatta*



The Synod on the Family

As Bishop Ellison has recently reminded us, 'family life is the foundation stone of a stable and responsible society'

Here are a few items relating to the much-awaited Synod on the Family in Rome from 4th to 25th October

AFTER a short general introduction, participants at the Synod will split into small linguistic groups, so that there are many small group discussions, but no general discussion among all of the Synod Fathers.

The small groups will then bring their conclusions to the General Secretariat of the Synod and to the General Relator, who will give a final report at the end of the Synod, which will conclude with a speech by the Pope.



WE believe that family life is the foundation stone of a stable and responsible society. The absence of this has been, unfortunately, the source of so much pain, brokenness and violence across the world. May Mary our Mother be for us a sign of hope and comfort as we try to bring together our families and friends; especially those in need of our support and encouragement.

*Bishop Robert Ellison
Homily for Sang Marie 2015 (page 24)*

'Synod will uphold Christ's teaching'



THE VATICAN'S Secretary of State has assured the faithful that all the bishops attending the Synod on the Family are agreed they proclaim the Christian doctrine of marriage, founded on the teaching of Jesus.

Cardinal Pietro Parolin told the Belgian Christian weekly 'Tertio': 'It is true that pastors can sometimes have differing opinions

on single pastoral issues, but this really shows that the Church is a living institution.' He added: 'The presence of the Pope is a guarantee for all and the safeguard of the faith.'

Healing wounds

The Cardinal continued: 'We are all agreed on the essential: that it is necessary, with courage, to proclaim the Christian doctrine of marriage, founded on the teaching of Jesus, and, at the same time, tend to the wounds of those who have made mistakes and are suffering.'

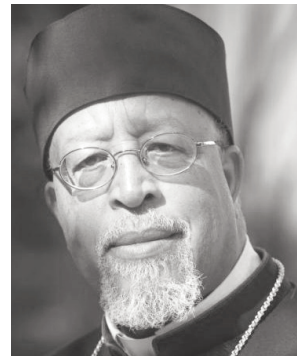
'The synod is a place for debate and discernment, but it does not have deliberative powers. It is called, rather, to offer guidance and bring suggestions to the Holy Father, who is the guarantor of the unity of the Church.'

African cardinal: 'Synod will let bishops adapt to local culture'

THE FAMILY Synod will allow bishops to adapt Church teaching on the family to local culture and the economic situation, an African cardinal has predicted.

Cardinal Berhaneyesus Souraphiel of Addis Ababa said: 'The Catholic Church is a universal institution, both human and divine... The issues families are facing in some parts of the world would be different to those in other parts of the world.'

He said that while Europe and North America face problems such as how to respond pastorally to state-sanctioned same-sex unions or divorced and remarried Catholics, families in other parts of the world face issues that arise from economic globalisation and rapid urbanisation.



Poverty 'the big issue'

'For us in Ethiopia, the big issue will be poverty,' the cardinal declared. 'If you are not sure if you can continue providing sustenance for the family, food and so on – not only rent, but food - if you don't have this [basic economic stability] you might find the husband working somewhere else, the wife working somewhere else. The family separates. And then the children suffer.'

With more and more Ethiopian women finding work abroad in Arab states as domestic workers and Ethiopian men seeking jobs in mines or on large-scale farms, Ethiopia's rapidly-expanding economy is making it hard to keep a family together, the cardinal said. 'How can the Church contribute to the alleviation of poverty?'

Cardinal Souraphiel said that bishops' conferences should help individual bishops to adapt synod teaching to their country or region.

'Episcopal conferences have been sent, not to replace or to change the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ or the teaching of the Church, but to see that the teaching of the Gospel is inculturated, is put into the life situation of the particular country or particular society.'

Africans will make their voices heard

The cardinal predicted that Africans will make their voices heard at the synod. 'The African message for the synod on the family is life. So let us give importance to life. Let us stand for life... Many things are changing. But there must also be values which remain. Love between husband and wife, respect between children and parents, respect for elders should remain, should endure.'

Francis: the importance of the family



Good education plants seeds when we are young, and these continue to bear fruit throughout life... I would stress the great importance of the family, which is 'the place in which

life – the gift of God – can be properly welcomed and protected ...and can develop...

- **In the family** we first learn how to show love and respect for life; we are taught the proper use of things, order and cleanliness, respect for the local eco-system and care for all creatures.

- **In the family** we receive an integral education, which enables us to grow harmoniously in personal maturity.

- **In the family** we learn to ask without demanding, to say 'thank you' as an expression of genuine gratitude for what we have been given, to control our aggressivity and greed, and to ask forgiveness when we have caused harm. These simple gestures of heartfelt courtesy help to create a culture of shared life and respect for our surroundings.

Pope Francis: Laudato Si'

Representing West Africa



REPRESENTING The Gambia and Sierra Leone at the Family Synod will be the Bishop of Bo, the Rt Revd Charles Alieu Matthew Campbell.

Representing Senegal, Mauritania, Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau will be Benjamin Ndiaye (*right*), Archbishop of Dakar.

Representing other West African countries will be

Benin: Eugène Cyrille Houndékon, Bishop of Abomey

Burkina Faso & Niger: Joseph Sama, Bishop of Nouna, Burkina Faso

Chad: Henri Coudray, Titular Bishop of Silli, Vicar-Apostolic of Mongo

Côte d'Ivoire: Ignace Bessi Dogbo, Bishop of Katiola

Ghana: Gabriel Charles Palmer-Buckle, Archbishop of Accra

Guinea: Raphaël Balla Guilavogui, Bishop of N'Zérékoré

Liberia: Anthony Fallah Borwah, Bishop of Gbarnga

Mali: Jonas Dembélé, Bishop of Kayes

Nigeria: Matthew Man-oso Ndagoso, Archbishop of Kaduna; Camillus Raymond Umoh, Bishop of Ikot Ekpene; Jude Ayodeji Arogundade, Bishop of Ondo

Togo: Jacques Danka Longa, Bishop of Kara

* Also taking part in the Synod will be Cardinal Philippe Nakellentube Ouédrogo of Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Here & there

NEWS FROM AROUND THE DIOCESE

New parish appointments

FROM 1st October some priests will begin ministry in a new parish. The changes, made by Bishop Robert Ellison, are as follows:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| • Fr Anthony Gabisi | St Therese Kanifing |
| • Fr Pascal Mendy | St Therese Kanifing (assistant) |
| • Fr Bruno Toupan | Holy Spirit Banjul |
| • Fr Michael Gomez CSSp | Holy Family Fajara |
| • Fr Michael Ndecky | Holy Cross Brusibi |
| • Fr Victor Ndecky | St Kizito Bakoteh |
| • Fr Pius Gidi CSSp | St Martin Kartong |
| • Fr Matthew Mendy | St Michael Ngongon |
| • Fr Benedict Mba MSP | St Peter Lamin |
| • Fr Godwin Nnabazie MSP | St Peter Lamin (assistant) |
| • Fr Dominic Asare CSSp | Sacred Heart Bansang |
| • Fr Tanislaus Ndecky | Our Lady of Fatima Bwiam |

Fr Asare is a newcomer to the diocese.

Following his annual leave, Bishop Robert Ellison is due to return to the diocese early in October.

Correction

ON page 12 of the August/September *Newsletter*, the phrase 'Walking for just 11 days a week...' should read, '...for just 11 hours a week'.

We are sorry that the Reflection for the 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time (6th September) did not refer to that day's reading from the Letter of St James, but to another portion of his letter.

Dakar choir at St Peter's

THE HALL at St Peter's Senior Secondary School Lamin rang with song on Friday evening 4th September, when choristers from the Church of St Augustin des Niayes, in Guediawaye, Dakar, presented a programme with the choir of St Peter's Lamin. Songs were sung in Wolof and other local languages, as well as in French. During their visit to The Gambia from 2nd to 7th September, the visitors stayed at the Catholic Kindergarten at Lamin Wayoto.

Honouring the dead of the battlefields

ON Sunday 8th November the annual service of remembrance will be held at the War Cemetery Fajara.

During the Second World War (1939-45) two West African brigades took part in campaigns in East Africa and Burma.

During and after the war, many Gambian and British soldiers were buried throughout The Gambia, often with ten bodies to a grave. In 1949 many of these remains were re-buried in the newly-consecrated Fajara War Cemetery.

The site of the Supreme Court and Arch 22 was originally the European cemetery, where some servicemen had been buried. In the 1990s, after Christian prayers, the remains were re-interred at Fajara.

Fajara War Cemetery contains 203 graves of Second World War servicemen: 122 Gambians and other West Africans, 63 British, ten Canadians, two Australians, two New Zealanders, two Frenchmen, one Rhodesian and one Norwegian.

GPI COMMUNICATIONS UNIT

DVD video production, documentaries, weddings, funerals, special occasions, camera hire, digital editing (video & audio). Telephone 4376617

Bishop Cleary celebrates his ninetieth birthday

ON Tuesday 1st September, Bishop Emeritus Michael Cleary celebrated his ninetieth birthday.

It was as recently as March this year that Bishop Cleary said a fond, final farewell to The Gambia, having spent sixty-two years here as teacher, Principal and Bishop.

Before leaving, Bishop Cleary said, 'As Bishop, I travelled throughout the country and got to know it well and love its people. Otherwise, I would not have stayed. I made many close friends here, both Muslim and Christian. I wish to sincerely thank you for the best years of my life....'

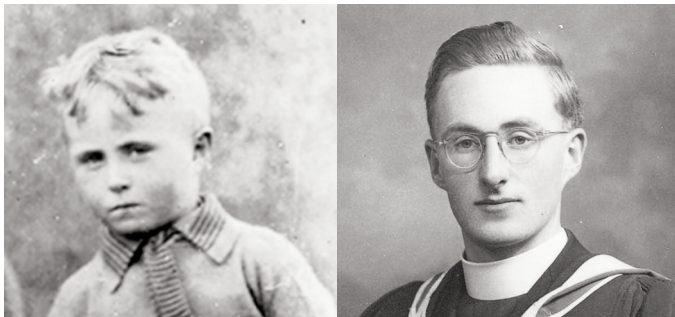
When young Fr Michael Cleary first arrived in 1953, the small Catholic Mission - not then a diocese - was run by Irish missionaries. Now, the much more numerous Gambian Catholic faithful are led by Gambian priests, and the laity are more than ever engaged in the running of their Church: developments that Bishop Cleary always prayed for and helped to foster.

'That's where I want to go'

Michael Joseph Cleary was born in County Mayo, Ireland, in September 1925, the youngest of four children, with an elder brother and two sisters.

Eight days after his birth, his mother died; and four years later, his father. Michael was brought up separately from his brother and sisters.

When, at Michael's school, a Holy Ghost Father showed a missionary film made in Africa, he decided: 'That's where I want to go.'



Michael Cleary as a small boy, and just before he came to The Gambia

Both his late sisters entered religious orders: one as a Dominican in South Africa, the other a contemplative sister in England and Ireland. His late brother followed in his father's footsteps as a farmer.

He entered the novitiate of the Holy Ghost Fathers (the Spiritans) in 1943, then studied at University College Dublin.

Posting to The Gambia

Michael Cleary was ordained priest in 1952, and the following year was posted to The Gambia.

This country was not generally thought of as an exciting place in which to serve as a missionary. Holy Ghost Fathers in eastern Nigeria and in East Africa could boast of huge and growing congregations, whereas The Gambia was a Muslim country with only a few Christians, and a Catholic population of around 3,000.

When Fr Cleary arrived, his Superior, Monsignor Michael Moloney, decreed that he should teach at St Augustine's High

School, then in Hagan Street (Daniel Goddard Street) Banjul. Teaching at the school were Irish priests, local staff and VSOs (British volunteers). Fr Cleary taught maths and history. He was to spend 25 years at the school.

In 1960, when Fr Michael Frawley, the Principal, returned to Nigeria, Fr Cleary became his successor. He led the raising of funds for the relocation of the school to new premises in Campama, achieved in 1968.

In those early years, the main Sunday services at the Cathedral (then the Parish Church) were Latin High Mass in the morning and Latin Vespers and Benediction in the evening. Later, changes brought about by the Second Vatican Council led to today's simplified Order of Mass, with greater lay participation, and celebrated in English or a local language.

In 1975 Fr Cleary became Vicar-General - Bishop Moloney's deputy. Then, in 1978, after 17 years as Principal, he left St Augustine's to become Diocesan Educational Secretary.

In 1980 Bishop Moloney resigned due to ill health. The following January Fr Cleary was summoned to Liberia, where the Nuncio told him that he had been chosen to succeed Bishop Moloney.

The new Bishop made history by being ordained at St Augustine's High School. He was to head the diocese for almost 25 years, until 25th February 2006.

Among notable events was the visit in February 1992 of St John Paul II. In November 2000, President Yahya Jammeh appointed Bishop Cleary an honorary Commander of the Order of the Republic of The Gambia (CRG).

Bishop Cleary presided over a steadily-growing flock. He furthered the role of the laity, both in the liturgy and in the parishes. During his 'intervention' at the first Synod for Africa in 1994, the Bishop of Banjul declared:

'The place and role of the laity is paramount: they are the Church, and their mission is the mission of the Church itself.... This demands lay participation in all areas of Church life, and calls for collaboration in ministry. Therefore I call upon this Synod, firstly, to recognise that collaborative ministry is an imperative, not an option, and secondly, to allow churches to shape ministries adapted to their particular pastoral priorities.'

Bishop Cleary's prayer was for priests from The Gambia itself, and by the time of his retirement he had ordained fourteen Gambians. There were 64 churches and 22 priests, as opposed to 14 priests when he had taken over.

When Bishop Michael Cleary reached the age of 75 he was asked to stay on at the head of the diocese. Not until he became 80 did he retire, in February 2006.

It is reported that now, back in Ireland, our Bishop Emeritus is in good health and spirits.



KEEP IN TOUCH WITH YOUR DIOCESE

- visit www.banjuldiocese.gm

Fr Anthony Gabisi celebrates in Washington DC



FATHER Anthony Gabisi joined Gambians resident in the United States on Saturday 25th July at a Mass at the Church of St Camillus in Washington DC to celebrate his thirty years in the priesthood.

The Mass was attended by the Gambian Ambassador to the United States, Sheikh Omar Faye, the Chairman of the Democratic Union of Gambian Activists (DUGA), Ousainou Mbenga, and many African dignitaries, together with members of the Gambian Christian community, some coming from as far as Pennsylvania.

The Mass was preceded by a procession from the north side of the church grounds to the strains of *Nyuu Na La Hol bu Sela*.

It began to drizzle with rain, which many took as a sign that the Blessed Virgin was attentive to their prayers.

Fr Gabisi was welcomed at the church door by a Gambian

elder in Washington DC, Auntie Grace Boneca Daniels, while *Na Nhel Mepa Sega* was sung by all.

The Mass was in Wolof, animated by Francis Bass Mendy and John Prospere Joof. Everyone was surprised by the level of participation, given the long absence from The Gambia of most of the congregation.

In his homily, Fr Gabisi said that it was by God's will that he had been a priest for 30 years. He stressed that God is always forgiving - so everyone should seek to grow closer to him.

Fr Gabisi's nephew, Samba Latirr Njie, proposed a vote of thanks. He pointed out that his uncle and Fr Peter Gomez were not only the first Gambians in modern times to be ordained priest, but that Fr Gabisi was the first priest from The Gambia to celebrate Mass with the Gambian community in Washington DC.

Presentation

At the end of the Mass, the Gambia-US Catholic Council presented Fr Gabisi with a processional crucifix and two thuribles for St Kizito's Bakoteh, where he is Parish Priest.

After the Mass, Fr Gabisi attended a reception in his honour organised by a one-time participant in the Olympic Games, Peter Ceesay.

Mr Ceesay declared, 'There's nothing more beautiful than coming together in the name of God.'

He called on Gambian Catholics living abroad to support the Diocese of Banjul and its clergy.

Mr Ceesay thanked everyone for coming to what he called a 'monumental gathering' - adding that in future, 'Any Gambian priest who visits the United States will be invited to Washington for prayer and fellowship.'



GPI weekend at Cap Skiring

OVER many years, staff at the Gambia Pastoral Institute (GPI) have welcomed visitors from near and far for meetings, meals and accommodation. But never before have the staff set forth as they did on Friday 31st July, to become visitors themselves.

The weekend outing was suggested by the staff, and agreed to by GPI's Director, Fr Peter Lopez. Their destination was Cap Skiring, in Casamance - where, as the saying goes, 'A good time was had by all.'



The GPI staff wish to thank all their new friends in Casamance for their kindness and generosity, especially Messieurs René Diatta, Gibril Diatta & Joël Ehemba.



BENDAVIA TRAVEL AGENCY LTD.

WE MAKE TRAVEL EASIER FOR YOU

CONTACT US AT OUR ULTRA-MODERN OFFICE COMPLEX
AND BEGIN YOUR FLIGHT IN STYLE

FOR ALL YOUR HOLIDAY AND BUSINESS TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

- ** ALL AIR TICKETS
- ** WORLDWIDE TRAVEL / CONNECTIONS
- ** HOTELS WORLDWIDE
- ** CAR HIRE
- ** TRAVEL INSURANCE

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Please Call Telephone: (220) 4495358 / 4495359 . Mobile : 7237046 / 9794110 / 6458435
 Email: bendaviatravel@yahoo.com, bendavia@qanet.gm
 website: www.bendaviatravelagency.com

TALENT HOUSE

Do you want to sing, dance or learn how to play a musical instrument of your choice?
 Are you looking for a place where you could do your recordings on CD/DVD clips and
 make your adverts? Are you interested in creative bead-making, wirework jewellery,
 event-planning & decoration, interior design, gift-packaging & souvenirs,
 exquisite bridal-packaging, hat design and bridal make-over?

Visit us at TALENT HOUSE, Multimedia & Recording Studio (a subsidiary)
 Senegambia, Kololi, opposite Sarge's Hotel.

Telephone/Fax: (220) 4465773 /9200607/9308389/7489207/3997880

Email: talenthouse2007@yahoo.com

Website: exclusivehandmadebeadsandjewelries.blogspot.com

HOT FM RADIO 104.3

Partners with Deutsche Welle (DW) Bonn Germany.

Garba Jahumpa Road
 Bakau New Town



Enlightening Your World

Motto: Nil Desperandum

Tel: 9278090 / 7654093/ 6126124 / 3486035

Email: info@hotfmgambia.gm / hotfmgambia@gmail.com/ www.hotfmgambia.gm
www.hotfmgambia.com

How to pray the rosary

Anyone who knows six easy prayers can pray the rosary.
You will also need to know twenty Mysteries to meditate on as you pray.

How often do you say the rosary?

every day?

fairly often?

occasionally?

never?

THOSE who don't know the rosary, or who neglect it, are depriving themselves of a devotion which has enriched the lives of countless Catholics for many centuries.

The rosary and other traditional devotions are not compulsory; even so, why not join Catholics throughout The Gambia, Africa and the world in 'saying your beads'?

The rosary is versatile. It may be prayed in groups in church, at home, and by individuals almost everywhere – even in the bus on the way to work (though it's better to say it in a quieter place).

By tradition, October is the Month of the Rosary, so now is a good time to take up the rosary again, or learn how to say it – and reap its benefits.



Introductory prayers

We begin the rosary by saying the introductory prayers.

On the crucifix, we make the **sign of the Cross**:

+ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Still on the crucifix, we say the **Apostles' Creed**:

I BELIEVE in God, the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth;
and in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended into hell;
on the third day he arose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God, the Father almighty;
from there he shall come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting. Amen.

On the first bead, we say the **Our Father**:

OUR Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come;
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
Amen.

On each of the next three beads we say the **Hail Mary**:

HAIL Mary, full of grace! the Lord is with thee;
blessed are thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death.
Amen.

Now we say the **Glory be**.

GLORY be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Optionally, we may add

The Fatima Prayer (Pope Pius XII)

O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell, take all souls to heaven, and help especially those most in need of your mercy. Amen.

We have now completed the introductory prayers.

Saying the five decades

We now say the five decades of the rosary, meditating on the mystery we have chosen for this day.

Each decade consists of one **Our Father**, ten **Hail Marys**, one **Glory be** and one **O my Jesus** (the Fatima Prayer).

After the fifth decade we conclude the rosary by saying the **Hail Holy Queen**.



Increase in Mass stipends

Mass and other stipends in the Diocese of Banjul are increased from Thursday 1st October 2015.

Baptism: D100

Confirmation: D200

Marriage D300

Mass Intention D100 (a smaller offering is acceptable)

Funerals - at the discretion of the bereaved.



The mysteries

On Mondays and Saturdays we usually meditate on the **JOYFUL MYSTERIES**

First Joyful Mystery: The annunciation to Mary

I desire the love of humility

Think of the humility of the Blessed Virgin when the Angel Gabriel greeted her with: 'Hail, full of grace.' Luke 1:26

Second Joyful Mystery: The visit of Mary to Elizabeth

I desire charity towards my neighbour

Think of Mary's charity in visiting her cousin Elizabeth and remaining with her for three months before the birth of John the Baptist. Luke 1:39

Third Joyful Mystery: The birth of Jesus

I desire the love of God

Think of the poverty, so lovingly accepted by Mary when she placed the infant Jesus, our God and Redeemer, in a manger in a stable at Bethlehem. Luke 2:1

Fourth Joyful Mystery: The Presentation in the Temple

I desire a spirit of sacrifice

Think of Mary's obedience to the law of God in presenting the child Jesus in the Temple. Luke 2:22

Fifth Joyful Mystery: Finding Jesus in the Temple

I desire zeal for the glory of God

Think of the anxiety with which Mary sought the child Jesus for three days, and the joy with which she found him in the midst of the teachers of the Temple. Luke 2:41

On Thursdays we usually meditate on the **LUMINOUS MYSTERIES**

First Luminous Mystery: The baptism of Jesus

Think of the Father's voice from the heavens: 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.' Matthew 3:17

Second Luminous Mystery: The wedding at Cana

Think of Jesus' first miracle at Cana in Galilee, when he 'revealed his glory, and his disciples began to believe in him' John 2:11

Third Luminous Mystery: Proclaiming the Kingdom

Think of Jesus in Galilee proclaiming the gospel: 'This is the time of fulfilment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.' Mark 1:15

Fourth Luminous Mystery: The transfiguration

Think of Jesus transfigured before Peter, James and John. 'His face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light' Matthew 17:2

Fifth Luminous Mystery: The Holy Eucharist

Think of the Last Supper, when Jesus took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take and eat; this is my body.' Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins' Matthew 26:26

On Tuesdays and Fridays we usually meditate on the **SORROWFUL MYSTERIES**

First Sorrowful Mystery: The agony in the garden

I desire true repentance for my sins

Think of our Lord Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane, suffering anguish for our sins. Matthew 26:36

Second Sorrowful Mystery: The scourging at the pillar

I desire a spirit of mortification

Think of the cruel scourging at the pillar that our Lord suffered; the heavy blows that tore his flesh. Matthew 27:26

Third Sorrowful Mystery: The crowning with thorns

I desire moral courage.

Think of the crown of sharp thorns that was forced upon our Lord's head and the patience with which he endured the pain for our sins. Matthew 27:27

Fourth Sorrowful Mystery: Jesus carries his cross

I desire the virtue of patience

Think of the heavy cross, so willingly carried by our Lord, and ask him to help you to carry your own cross without complaint. Matthew 27:32

Fifth Sorrowful Mystery: The crucifixion

I desire the grace of final perseverance

Think of the love which filled Christ's Sacred Heart during his three hours' agony on the cross, and ask him to be with you at the hour of your own death. Matthew 27:33

On Wednesdays and Sundays we usually meditate on the **GLORIOUS MYSTERIES**

First Glorious Mystery: The resurrection

I desire a strong faith

Think of Christ's triumph when on the third day after his death he rose from the tomb and for 40 days appeared to his Mother and to his disciples. John 20:1

Second Glorious Mystery: The ascension

I desire the virtue of hope

Think of the ascension of Jesus Christ, 40 days after his resurrection, in the presence of Mary and his disciples. Luke 24:36

Third Glorious Mystery: The descent of the Holy Spirit

I desire zeal for the glory of God

Think of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Mary and the apostles in the form of tongues of fire, in fulfilment of Christ's promise. Acts 2:1

Fourth Glorious Mystery: The assumption of Mary

I desire the grace of a holy death

Think of the assumption of Mary into heaven, when she was united with her Divine Son.

Fifth Glorious Mystery: The coronation of Mary

I desire a greater love for the Blessed Virgin Mary

Think of the crowning of Mary as Queen of Heaven by her Divine Son, to the joy of all the saints.

Note that other weekly patterns of the Mysteries may be used: for example, on Sundays in Christmas Time, the Joyful Mysteries, and on Sundays in Lent, the Sorrowful Mysteries.

After each decade, the Fatima Prayer (as above) may be used.



In conclusion, after the saying of five decades, **Hail, Holy Queen** is customarily said:

HAIL, Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy,
hail our life, our sweetness and our hope.
To you do we cry, poor banished children of Eve.
To you do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping
in this valley of tears.
Turn then, O most gracious advocate, your eyes of mercy
towards us;
and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of
your womb, Jesus.
O clement! O loving! O sweet Virgin Mary!

PRAY for us, O Holy Mother of God, that we may be
made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Final prayer

O GOD, whose only-begotten Son, by his life, death and
resurrection has purchased for us the rewards of eternal
life; grant, we beseech you, that, meditating upon these
mysteries of the most holy rosary of the Blessed Virgin
Mary, we may imitate what they contain and obtain what
they promise, through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

MOST Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.
Immaculate heart of Mary, pray for us.

+ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the
Holy Spirit. Amen.



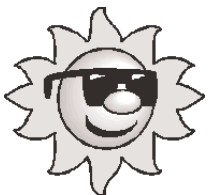
THE FAMILY rosary is recited aloud by as many of the
family and their friends as can be present. Any family (two or
more people) may say the family rosary in any suitable place
and at any time.

A leader says aloud the first part of each prayer; a second
person or group of persons answers aloud the second part of
the prayer.

To begin the family rosary, all hold the crucifix of their
rosary in the right hand and make the sign of the Cross.
The leader begins the Apostles' Creed and proceeds through
the rest of the rosary. The leader announces the Mystery
before each decade.

Five decades (one complete Mystery: Joyful, Luminous,
Sorrowful or Glorious) should be recited each day.

*Blessed Mary, grant that by meditating on the
mysteries of our redemption, our faith may be renewed,
and our hope and charity strengthened.*



Fee moi Gambia

Spooky!

FROM half-way through October, shops in the smarter part
of town will be selling masks and fancy clothes depicting
witches, goblins, black cats and ghosts. It's all to do with
Hallowe'en - Saturday 31st October - which, American-style,
is celebrated among some middle-class Gambian families as
a children's dressing-up and party day.

Hallowe'en is the evening before All Saints' Day, which in
England was commonly known as All Hallows or Hallowmas.
The witches and spooks derive from pagan times, when 31st
October was the eve of the Celtic New Year. These
observances influenced the Christian eve of All Saints.

Hallowe'en gradually lost its religious content. In the late
19th century it was introduced in the United States, where it
became commercialised.

Hallowe'en is still associated in a frivolous way with evil
spirits and the supernatural, when children dress up and play
pranks on each other and on adults.

You may think that much - if not all - of this play-acting is
simply harmless fun. But children should surely be told that
the day they really need to know about is the feast of
All Saints, on Sunday 1st November: one of the great days in
the Catholic calendar.

Well done, everyone!

THE BAN on cheap plastic bags has already had faster and
better effects than many people – including me – anticipated.
Shops are co-operating by providing paper bags. Better still,
more and more shoppers are providing their own re-usable
bags. Fewer plastic bags are blowing about our streets and
infesting rubbish heaps. There's a growing communal feeling
that everyone needs to help keep our environment clean and
healthy – and easier on the eye.

Mind you, the campaign to foster a *set-settal* mentality has
a long way to go. In addition to rubbish pollution, too many
cars emit foul fumes; not to mention noise pollution.

Yes: noise pollution! It's something we should be concerned
about as our urban areas become more crowded and more
socially-mixed, and as we need more than ever to be on good
terms with our neighbours.

Am I a good neighbour if I regularly broadcast my own
musical tastes into the next-door compound?

Trouble with the mike?

I RECENTLY visited a 'born-again' church. I won't say
anything about the content and style of the worship – except
that it was very different to proceedings in a Catholic church!
But I must say that I was impressed with the sound system:
microphones and loudspeakers were almost too efficient...

Alas, in some Catholic churches congregations are
subjected to shrieks, hums and burps from loudspeakers - or
excessive loudness. Or the microphones aren't working at all.

Can we not do better?

family circle



On the increase

THE CONDITION known as diabetes occurs when the level of glucose in your blood is too high, and your body cannot use it for energy.

If you have diabetes, don't feel isolated: you're one of many! Diabetes is increasingly common in The Gambia and almost everywhere else. Yet around a third of those have the condition don't know it.

All of us, sufferers from diabetes and those so far free from it, should know something about the condition: what causes it, the dangers it poses, and how it can be detected and treated.

What to look out for

Normally, the glucose in our blood is transferred to the muscles by insulin. Diabetes develops when not enough insulin is produced, so that the glucose cannot get from the blood to the muscles.

If you have diabetes you may experience some of the following symptoms:

- **Passing a lot of urine**, especially at night. Your body tries to flush the excess glucose out of your body by filtering it from the blood and passing it in your urine.

- **Increased thirst**

Because you are passing a lot of urine, your body needs to take on more fluids to prevent dehydration.

- **Lethargy** - loss of energy

The glucose cannot get from the blood into the muscles. So you will feel low on energy.

- **Recurring infections** such as thrush, urine infections or boils

High glucose levels in the blood are a source of food for bacteria and fungi, and your immune system becomes compromised.

- **Temporary blurred vision**

High glucose levels in the blood affect the glucose component in your eyes, causing blurred vision. This is usually temporary: once diabetes is under control, your vision may return to normal.

- **Weight loss**

If you have some of these symptoms you should see your doctor, who will perform a simple blood test which will tell whether you have diabetes or not.

The two types of diabetes

There are two types of diabetes. They are known as Type 1 and Type 2.

Type 2 is much more common than Type 1.

Type 1 usually develops over a few weeks and mainly affects children and young adults. People with Type 1 diabetes produce little or no insulin, and manage their condition with insulin injections.



Type 2 diabetes usually develops in people over the age of 40. But increasingly it is developing at an earlier age. It develops slowly, and many people don't realise that they have it, because the symptoms may not appear for some years.

People with Type 2 diabetes do produce insulin, but either it's not enough, or the amount they produce doesn't work properly. They may not have to inject insulin: they can often treat their diabetes with diet and exercise alone, or in combination with tablets.

But to keep diabetes under control, some Type-2 sufferers do need to inject insulin.

Don't think of Type 2 diabetes as 'mild'. People with Type 2 have a three-fold increased risk of suffering a heart attack and are vulnerable to a wide range of health complications.

Watch what you eat!

If you have diabetes, be careful what you eat.

Take regular meals. Eat fewer sugary, fried and fatty foods. Reduce salt intake. Go easy with alcohol.

Take regular exercise; for example, half an hour of brisk walking, jogging, swimming or cycling at least three times a week.



Test your brain cells!



HERE are a couple of questions to test your perception and logic. Answer them quickly, and by yourself.

1. You are a participant in a race. You overtake the second person. What position are you now in?
2. If you overtake the last person in the race, what position are you in?

*1. If your answer was that you are first in the race, you are wrong. If you overtake the second person you are in second place.
2. If you answered that you are the last person, you have been fooled by the question. How can you overtake the last person in a race?*

Cleaning your refrigerator



MORE and more families are using a refrigerator. Its use enables food and drinks to be stored safely – often saving money, and certainly saving frequent trips to the market and shops.

Every so often, a refrigerator needs to be cleaned from the inside out. The shelves need washing down, and food must be thrown out if it has outlived its shelf life.

Take all your food out of the refrigerator. Place it on a table so that the refrigerator is completely empty.

- Throw out any old, mouldy or inedible food. Don't be reluctant to throw away items that you never use.

- Remove shelving and drawers from the refrigerator.

- Wash shelving and drawers by hand. Never wash a cold glass shelf with hot water: the sudden temperature change could shatter the glass. For spills or stains use hot water and ammonia. Dilute a little ammonia in hot water (1:5 ratio) and let the item(s) soak before cleaning.

- Be sure to let the shelving dry out completely before putting back into the refrigerator.

- Wipe the inside of the refrigerator. Don't use soap or a chemical cleaner, but two tablespoons of baking powder and 1 litre of hot water.

- Be sure to clean the inside of the refrigerator doors.

- Clean the rubber seal around the refrigerator door using a solution of ½ water and ½ vinegar or bleach. Don't saturate the seal with undiluted bleach, as this may ruin it. Pat the seal dry. You can apply body lotion on the gasket to keep the rubber supple.

- Put the food back into the refrigerator. Wipe off any jars, bottles or plastic containers. Double-check expiry dates on any perishable items before putting them back.

- Wipe down all exterior surfaces of the refrigerator, including the front, back, sides, and top. Using a towel and an all-purpose liquid cleaner (available at supermarkets).

We thank you, Lord

SAYING grace before meals, especially when the family is eating together, is a good way to remind your children of their religion, and strengthen family ties.

In his recent encyclical, *Audate Si'*, Pope Francis says:

I ask all believers to return to this beautiful and meaningful custom [of giving thanks to God before and after meals]. That moment of blessing, however brief, reminds us of our dependence on God for life; it strengthens our feeling of gratitude for the gifts of creation; it acknowledges those who by their labours provide us with these goods; and it reaffirms our solidarity with those in greatest need.

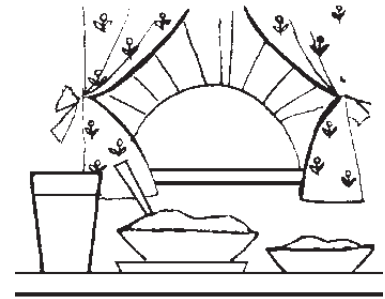
Some families share the saying of grace. Sometimes it's father, sometimes mother, sometimes a grandparent, sometimes a child.

Note that saying grace is not made more effective by length. Sincerity and simplicity are what matters.

Always begin by making the sign of the Cross.

You can then use your own words to say grace, speaking in any language.

Everyone should respond by saying a heartfelt 'Amen.'



Some people feel at home with a traditional, formal 'table prayer'. Here are two or three (there are many more):

- BLESS this food, Lord, to our use, and make us mindful of the needs of others (through Jesus Christ our Lord...)

- ALMIGHTY and merciful Father, for these and all your gifts we give you hearty thanks (through Jesus Christ our Lord...)

- FOR what we are about to receive, may the Lord make us truly thankful (through Jesus Christ our Lord...)

- *AGIMUS tibi gratias, Domine Deus omnipotens, pro his et universis donis tuis, per Jesum Christum Dominus nostrum* (We give you thanks, Lord God almighty, for this and all your gifts, through Jesus Christ our Lord...)

It is traditional to say a prayer at the end of the meal, finishing with: 'May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.'

If you have visitors who may not say grace in their own homes, the saying of grace at your table provides a simple, gentle reminder that Christ is always a guest in your house.

The Pope's Prayer Intentions

October

- That human trafficking, the modern form of slavery, may be eradicated.
- That with a missionary spirit the Christian communities of Asia may announce the Gospel to those who are still awaiting it.

November

- That we may be open to personal encounter and dialogue with all, even those whose convictions differ from our own.
- That pastors of the Church, with profound love for their flocks, may accompany them and enliven their hope.



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

Sunday Reflections

Reflections, readings and prayers
 for the 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time to Christ the King



4th October 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Life-long commitment

FROM time to time, some Christians, including Catholics, assert that this or that Church teaching is too harsh or rigid - for example, in the matter of marriage and divorce. Yet in this all-important family matter, the Church's unchanging teaching derives from the clear word of Christ himself, as related in today's Gospel. 'From the beginning of creation God made them male and female... what God has joined together, let no-one separate.'

Jesus was referring to the second of the two accounts of creation given in Genesis (today's First Reading). Marriage, according to Christ and his Church, is the life-long commitment of a man and a woman, come what may, to love and succour one another.

The sacrament of marriage is of such binding significance that we refer to the Church herself as Christ's bride. The Church is bound to Christ, and he is bound to the Church, in a relationship of love so profound and intense that we learn from it that in all human relationships, above all in marriage, we must seek wholeness and self-sacrificing love - the love of Christ for his Church.

Collect

ALMIGHTY ever-living God, who in the abundance of your kindness surpass the merits and desires of all who entreat you, pour out your mercy upon us to pardon what conscience dreads and to give what prayer does not dare to ask...

Readings: Genesis 2:18-24. Psalm 127. Response: May the Lord bless us all the days of our lives. Hebrews 2:9-11.

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

Gospel: Mark 10: 2-16

Prayer over the Offerings

ACCEPT, O Lord, we pray, the sacrifices instituted by your commands and, through the sacred mysteries, which we celebrate with dutiful service, graciously complete the saving work by which you are pleased to redeem us...

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

Prayer after Communion

GRANT us, almighty God, that we may be refreshed and nourished by the Sacrament we have received, so as to be transformed into what we consume...

11th October 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Wisdom

THE BOOK of Wisdom was written about 100 years before Christ by an unknown member of the Jewish community in Alexandria, Egypt. Like other 'Wisdom' books in the Old Testament, it extols God as the source of all wisdom, anticipating St Paul's exclamation, 'To God only-wise be glory through Jesus Christ for ever!' (Romans 16:19).

Only God is wise; but we can become closer to him by seeking a measure of wisdom, like the rich man who knelt before Jesus and asked what he must do to inherit eternal life. This man fully observed the Jewish religious law; but our Lord said that this was not enough: the man must give up all he had and follow Jesus completely. The man's face fell. He went away. Complete submission to Jesus was too much...

Before we condemn this man, we should reflect that though we may be faithful in terms of Sunday Mass, daily prayers and doing a certain amount for our neighbour, almost all of us keep back part of our lives for our own gratification, rather than putting Christ first. In contrast, our Lord tells his disciples that anyone who gives up everything for him and the gospel will be repaid 'a hundred times over'.

So let us seek wisdom. The poet T.S. Eliot warns us: 'All our ignorance brings us nearer to death. But nearness to death no nearer to God. Where is the life we have lost in living? Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?'

Information? Go to the Internet. Knowledge? Try to understand whatever information you've gathered.

But to attain wisdom, open your heart and mind to Christ!

Collect

MAY your grace, O Lord, we pray, at all times go before us and follow after, and make us always determined to carry out good works...

Readings: Wisdom 7:7-11. Psalm 89:12-17. Response: Fill us with your love, that we may rejoice. Hebrews 4: 12-13.

Gospel acclamation: Alleluia... Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for revealing the mysteries of the kingdom to mere children...

Gospel: Mark 10: 17-30



Prayer over the Offerings

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

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

Prayer after Communion

WE entreat your majesty most humbly, O Lord, that, as you feed us with the nourishment which comes from the most holy Body and Blood of your Son, so you may make us sharers of his divine nature...

18th October
29th Sunday in
Ordinary Time
(Mission Sunday)
The cost of discipleship

SUFFERING is inextricably part of human experience. None of us can entirely escape it. But it may perplex us that the followers of Christ may suffer just because of their discipleship.

This, as today's Gospel reading tells us, is what Jesus' disciples James and John didn't understand. Yet Jesus told them that he himself had come into the world to serve. And Jesus' service was to culminate in nothing less than the offering of his very life - a cruel, unjust and bitter end.

We, Christ's followers today, may well face suffering. We know that in certain other parts of the world Christians are facing cruel persecution. Our own sufferings are much less.

We should take comfort that Christ himself suffered for us, whether our sufferings are many or minor. And we should seek to offer our sufferings to God in union with the Passion of Christ, so that in due course we shall enter his kingdom. The martyrs, who have given their lives to Christ through suffering much greater than ours, show us the way.

Collect

ALMIGHTY ever-living God, grant that we may always conform our will to yours and serve your majesty in sincerity of heart...

Readings: Isaiah 53:10-11. Psalm 32:1-5,18-20,22. Response: May your love be upon us, O Lord, as we place all our hope in you. Hebrews 4:14-16.

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

Gospel: Mark 10:35-45

Prayer over the Offerings

GRANT us, O Lord, we pray, a sincere respect for your gifts, that, through the purifying action of your grace, we may be cleansed by the very mysteries we serve...

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

Prayer after Communion

GRANT, O Lord, we pray, that, benefiting from participation in heavenly things, we may be helped by what you give in this present age and prepared for the gifts that are eternal...



25th October
30th Sunday in Ordinary
Time

'Shout for joy!'

WE often associate the prophet Jeremiah with gloom and foreboding; but he's not at all gloomy in today's first reading. Instead, he commands in the Lord's name, 'Proclaim! Praise! Shout! The Lord has saved his people..!'

We followers of Christ should certainly shout for joy. Not only at Mass but throughout every day we should feel glad to be alive - truly alive in Christ.

We are told in today's Gospel that the blind beggar Bartimæus shouted aloud. He believed that Jesus could restore his sight. When Jesus did so, Bartimæus followed him: he became Jesus' disciple.

Why did Jesus do so much, in an instant, for the blind beggar? It was because Bartimæus had faith in Jesus, who assured him: 'Your faith has saved you'.

Is our own faith in Jesus as strong as that of Bartimæus? Do we even acknowledge that we are spiritually blind? Do we proclaim, praise, shout our joy and thankfulness that in Christ we have all we can ever need?

Collect

ALMIGHTY ever-living God, increase our faith, hope and charity, and make us love what you command, so that we may merit what you promise...

Readings: Jeremiah 31:7-9. Psalm 125. Response: What marvels the Lord worked for us! Indeed we were glad. Hebrews 5:1-6.

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

Gospel: Mark 10:45-52

Prayer over the Offerings

LOOK, we pray, O Lord, on the offerings we make to your majesty, that whatever is done by us in your service may be directed above all to your glory...

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

Prayer after Communion

MAY your Sacraments, O Lord, we pray, perfect in us what lies within them, that what we now celebrate in signs we may one day possess in truth...



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

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

1st November

31st Sunday in Ordinary Time Solemnity of All Saints

Lights of hope

ALL Saints' is a holy day of obligation; yet many do not give the celebration the attention it deserves. This year, fortunately, this great celebration falls on a Sunday.

Let us pray that we may benefit from what we acclaim in the Apostles' Creed as 'the communion of saints'. The saints are 'the great cloud of witnesses' (Hebrews 12:1) 'too great to count', as today's first reading from Revelation tells us.

Pope Benedict XVI has described life as 'a journey on the sea of history, often dark and stormy, a voyage in which we watch for the stars that indicate our route. The true stars of our life are the people who have lived good lives. They are lights of hope.

'Certainly, Jesus Christ is the true light, the sun who has risen above all the shadows of history. But to reach him we also need lights close by - people who shine with his light, and so guide us along our way.'

The saints are our guides and our friends. They pray with us and for us. One day, by God's grace, we shall join them. May our Lady, the apostles, the martyrs and all the saints pray for us.

Collect

ALMIGHTY ever-living God, by whose gift we venerate in one celebration the merits of all the Saints, bestow on us, we pray, through the prayers of so many intercessors, an abundance of the reconciliation with you for which we earnestly long...

Readings: Revelation 7:2-4,9-14. Psalm 23:1-6. Response: Such are the men who seek your face, O Lord. 1 John 3:1-3.

Gospel acclamation: Alleluia... Come to me, all of you who labour and are overburdened, says the Lord, and I will give you rest.

Gospel: Matthew 5: 1-12

Prayer over the Offerings

MAY these offerings which we bring you in honour of all the Saints be pleasing to you, O Lord, and grant that, just as we believe the Saints to be already assured of immortality, so we may experience their concern for our salvation...

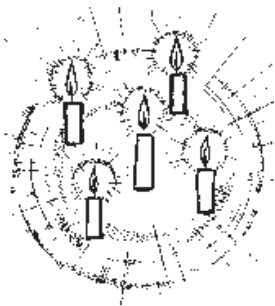
Preface

...for today by your gift we celebrate the festival of your city, the heavenly Jerusalem, our mother, where the great array of our brothers and sisters already gives you eternal praise.

Towards her, we eagerly hasten as pilgrims advancing by faith, rejoicing in the glory upon those exalted members of the Church through whom you give us, in our frailty, both strength and good example...

Prayer after Communion

AS we adore you, O God, who alone are holy and wonderful in all your Saints, we implore your grace, so that, coming to perfect holiness in the fullness of your love, we may pass from this pilgrim table to the banquet of our heavenly homeland...



Monday 2nd November The Commemoration of all the Faithful Departed

(All Souls Day)

ON All Souls Day we pray particularly for the souls in purgatory. The commemoration was first established by Odilo, Abbot of Cluny, France, in the 11th century; and by the 13th century it was celebrated widely.

It is Catholic doctrine that the prayers of the faithful on earth help cleanse those in purgatory and prepare them for heaven. 'From the beginning the Church has honoured the memory of the dead and offered prayers in suffrage for them, above all the Eucharistic sacrifice; so that, thus purified, they may attain the beatific vision of God.' (*Catechism of the Catholic Church 1032*)

See article on Purgatory by Pope Benedict XVI, page 19

We give below a set of prayers and readings for All Soul's Day; but please note that each priest may at his discretion use other material from the wide choice provided for this day.

Collect

LISTEN kindly to our prayers, O Lord, and, as our faith in your Son, raised from the dead, is deepened, so may our hope of resurrection for your departed servants also find new strength...

Readings: Isaiah 25:6-9. Psalm 26:1-4,7-9,13-14. Response: I am sure I shall see the Lord's goodness in the land of the living. Romans 5:5-11.

Gospel acclamation: Alleluia... It is my Father's will, says the Lord, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, and that I should raise it up on the last day.

Gospel: Mark 15:33-39 & 16:1-6

Prayer over the Offerings

LOOK favourably on our offerings, O Lord, so that your departed servants may be taken up into glory with your Son, in whose great mystery of love we are all united...

Preface

...In him the hope of resurrection has dawned, that those saddened by the certainty of dying might be consoled by the hope of resurrection to come. Indeed, for your faithful, Lord, life is changed, not ended, and, when this earthly dwelling turns to dust, an eternal dwelling is made ready for them in heaven...

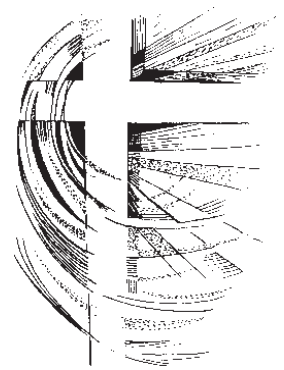
Any other of the five prefaces for the dead may be used

Prayer after Communion

GRANT we pray, O Lord, that your departed servants, for whom we have celebrated this paschal Sacrament, may pass over to a dwelling place of light and peace...

*Réquiem aeternam dona eis, Dómine,
et lux perpétua líceat eis*

*Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them*



8th November
32nd Sunday in
Ordinary Time

Pretension - and the real thing

CHRISTIANITY began as a religion of the poor, the persecuted and the dispossessed. Then, in the fourth century, the Roman Emperor Constantine became a convert, and Christianity became the official religion.

A good thing, you might say. A wonderful thing. Yes: but one result was that in some circles being Christian became prestigious, something to be proud of in the wrong way. Some Christians came to resemble the Pharisees of Jesus' time, proud of external observances - although our religion calls not for display, but service and sacrifice.

The poor widow in today's Gospel put only a small sum into the Temple collection-box. But to her it was a huge amount - she was making a great personal sacrifice. In contrast, the arrogant and complacent rich who parade their culture and religion as though everyone and everything else is inferior: what are they offering to God and man? A religious façade.

It's not easy, but let us seek sincerity in word and deed.

Illustration of today's Gospel: see back page.

Today we remember those in times of war, who have lost their lives, particularly during the First and Second World Wars: see page.... ???

Collect:

ALMIGHTY and merciful God, graciously keep us from all adversity, so that, unhindered in mind and body alike, we may pursue in freedom of heart the things that are yours...

Readings: 1 Kings 17:10-16. Psalm 145:7-10. Response: My soul, give praise to the Lord. Hebrews 9:24-28.

Gospel acclamation: Alleluia...Even if you have to die, says the Lord, and I will give you the crown of life...

Gospel: Mark 12:38-44

Prayer over the Offerings

LOOK with favour, we pray, O Lord, upon the sacrificial gifts offered here, that, celebrating in mystery the devotion...

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

Prayer after Communion

NOURISHED by this sacred gift, O Lord, we give your thanks and beseech your mercy, that, by the pouring forth of your Spirit, the grace of integrity in those your heavenly power has entered...

Lord Jesus, may the Sacrament
of your Body and Blood
fortify us on earth
as a foretaste of the heavenly banquet



15th November
33rd Sunday in
Ordinary Time

The last days

WE are approaching the end of the Church's year, and our readings from near the end of St Mark's Gospel contain Christ's teaching on the 'last days'.

The early Christians believed that the last days were close at hand. But two thousand years have passed, and earthly life continues, with all its achievements and failures. Christ himself tells us that no-one knows when the last hour will come, 'neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son; no one but the Father'.

If we don't know when or how Earth itself will end, we do know, each one of us, that our own time on earth is limited. We believe that God's love for us in Christ is so great that it transcends time and space. On earth and in the life to come, his love embraces us.

But what if we ignore or reject God's love?

Our response in this life may determine what becomes of us after death. We need not fear if we seek to live this present life as Christ himself wishes. *See page 19*

Collect

GRANT us, we pray, O Lord our God, the constant gladness of being devoted to you, for it is full and lasting happiness to serve with constancy the author of all that is good...

Readings: Daniel 12: 1-3. Psalm 15:5.8-11. Response: Preserve me, God. I take refuge in you. Hebrews 10:11-14.18.

Gospel acclamation: Alleluia...Stay awake and stand ready, for you do not know the hour when the Son of Man is coming.

Gospel: Mark 13:24-32

Prayer over the Offerings

GRANT, O Lord, we pray, that what we offer in the sight of your majesty may obtain for us the grace of being devoted to you and gain us the prize of everlasting happiness...

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

Prayer after Communion

WE have partaken of the gifts of this sacred mystery, humbling imploring, O Lord, that what your Son commanded us to do in memory of him may bring us growth in charity...



CONGRATULATIONS

On Wednesday 25th November, Father PASCHAL MENDY celebrates the Fifteenth Anniversary of his Ordination.

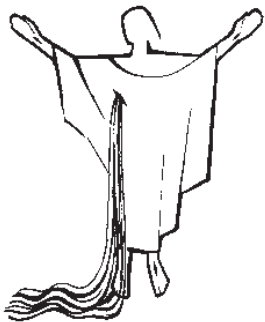
During November, eight other priests celebrate the anniversary of their ordination

Thursday 12th November	Fr Joseph Carl Gomez (2003)
	Fr Gabriel Mendy (2007)
	Fr Antoine Sambou (2007)
	Fr Emile Sambou (2007)
	Fr Bruno Toupan (2007)
Saturday 14th November	Fr Yenes Manneh (2009)
Tuesday 17th November	Fr Louis Mendy CSSp (2001)
Saturday 21st November	Fr John Mendy (2008)

Sunday 22nd November
Our Lord Jesus Christ,
King of the Universe

Unique kingship

THERE aren't many monarchies in today's world, but we're still fascinated to some degree by the mystique of monarchy: the king in his palace enjoying power and pomp, inspiring his subjects to willing obedience.



Nowadays, in this age of 'celebrities', there's another kind of king: the top pop star or footballer whom many, especially the young, adulate to excess.

In contrast to this, consider today's Gospel reading.

'Are you the king of the Jews?' Pilate asked Jesus. The Jewish authorities wanted to get rid of Jesus. Under Roman rule they weren't allowed to claim his life on religious grounds, so they dragged him before Pilate, the Roman ruler, claiming that Jesus was seeking to subvert Roman rule as 'king of the Jews'.

It was a lie. Jesus did tell Pilate that he was, indeed, a king. But he added, 'My kingdom is not of this world.'

Christ's birth, ministry, death and resurrection are God the Father's way of showing us his kingdom: a kingdom that embraces time present, time to come and the destiny of everyone. For this kingdom, Christ offered his life.

All we've read in Scripture since last Advent - the Old Testament and the New, the Gospels and the epistles - amount to this: that there is not, and never can be, any other king remotely like our Lord Jesus Christ.

As the Preface for today puts it, he sacrificed himself to present to his Father 'an eternal and universal kingdom, a kingdom of truth and life, a kingdom of holiness and grace, a kingdom of justice, love and peace...'

Let us in thankfulness acknowledge that we have a part in God's kingdom, and accept his gracious rule.

Collect

ALMIGHTY ever-living God, whose will is to restore all things in your beloved Son, the King of the universe, grant, we pray, that the whole of creation, set free from slavery, may render your majesty service and ceaselessly proclaim your praise...

Readings: Daniel 7:13-14. Psalm 92:1-2,5. Response: The Lord is king, with majesty enrobed. Revelation 1:5-8.

Gospel acclamation: Alleluia... Blessings on him who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessings on the coming kingdom of our father David!

Gospel: John 18:33-37

Prayer over the Offerings

AS we offer you, O Lord, the sacrifice by which the human race is reconciled to you, we humbly pray that your Son himself may bestow on all nations the gifts of unity and peace...

Preface

...for you anointed your Only-Begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, with the oil of gladness as eternal Priest and King of all creation, so that, by offering himself on the altar of the Cross as a spotless sacrifice to bring us peace, he might accomplish the mysteries of human redemption, and, making all created things subject to his will, he might present to the immensity of your majesty an eternal and universal kingdom, a kingdom of truth and life, a kingdom of holiness and grace, a kingdom of justice, love and peace...

Prayer after Communion

HAVING received the food of immortality, we ask, O Lord, that, glorying in obedience to the commands of Christ, King of the universe, we may live with him eternally in his heavenly Kingdom...

29th November: 1st Sunday of Advent

- see *December/January 2016 Newsletter*



**Question
Box**

MY brother and I enjoy reading the 'stars' in the newspapers. Just for fun, we sometimes discuss whether what the stars predict is 'true' for us - even though what one newspaper says is almost always quite different from what you see in another.

But our devout Auntie says that even looking at horoscopes is wrong.

Don't be grabbed by Cancer or the Crab...

GOD'S greatest gift to the human race is that he made us 'in his own image', and gave us free will.

Although we regularly encounter both good and bad people and events, this has nothing to do with the movement of the planets and stars, and we should shun such superstition.

As Shakespeare puts it in *Julius Cæsar*: 'The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves' (Act 1, scene 2, line 134)

The Catechism of the Catholic Church says: '...a sound Christian attitude consists in putting oneself confidently into the hands of Providence for whatever concerns the future, and giving up all unhealthy curiosity about it...' (2115)

'...Consulting horoscopes, astrology, palm-reading, interpretations of omens...all conceal a desire for power over time, as well as a wish to conciliate hidden powers. They contradict the honour, love and respect that we owe to God alone.' (2116)

Standing before the Judge

Pope BENEDICT XVI writes about Purgatory

IN the creed we find the phrase, 'He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead'. From the earliest times the prospect of judgment has influenced Christians in their daily living. This looking ahead has given Christianity its importance for the present moment.

A world which has to create its own justice is a world without hope. No one and nothing can answer for centuries of suffering.

A world without God is a world without hope (Ephesians 2:12). Only God can create justice. And faith gives us the certainty that he does so. The image of the Last Judgement is not primarily an image of terror, but an image of hope.

Frightening?

Is it not also a frightening image? I would say that it is an image that evokes responsibility - an image of the fear of which St Hilary spoke when he said that all our fear has its place in love.

God is justice and creates justice. This is our consolation and our hope. And in his justice there is also grace. Grace does not cancel out justice. It does not make wrong into right. It is not a sponge which wipes everything away, so that whatever someone has done on earth ends up being of equal value. Evildoers, in the end, do not sit at table at the eternal banquet beside their victims without distinction, as though nothing had happened.

The rich man and Lazarus

In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31), Jesus gives us the image of a soul destroyed by arrogance and opulence who has created a chasm between himself and the poor man; the chasm of being trapped within material pleasures; the chasm of forgetting the other, of incapacity to love, which then becomes a burning and unquenchable thirst. In this parable Jesus is not referring to the final destiny after the Last Judgment, but is taking up a notion found in early Judaism of an intermediate state between death and resurrection, a state in which the final sentence is yet to be pronounced.

Purification and healing

This early Jewish idea of an intermediate state views that these souls as not simply in temporary custody but, as the parable of the rich man illustrates, as already being punished or experiencing a provisional form of bliss. This state can involve purification and healing which mature the soul for communion with God.

The early Church took up these concepts, and in the Western Church they gradually developed into the doctrine of purgatory. With death, our life-choice becomes definitive – we stand before the Judge.



*God's judgment
is hope because it is
justice and grace*

Our choice can have a variety of forms. Some are people who have totally destroyed their desire for truth and readiness to love, people for whom everything has become a lie, people who have suppressed all love within themselves. In such people, all would be beyond remedy and the destruction of good would be irrevocable. This is what we mean by 'hell'.

On the other hand, there are people who are pure, permeated by God, and fully open to their neighbours - people for whom communion with God even now gives direction to their entire being, and whose journey towards God only brings to fulfilment what they already are.

We know from experience that neither case is normal in human life. For the great majority of people there remains an interior openness to truth, to love, to God. However, it is

covered by compromises with evil. Much filth covers purity, but the thirst for purity remains and it constantly re-emerges from all that is base.

What happens to such individuals when they appear before the Judge? Will all the impurity they have amassed through life suddenly cease to matter?

Each person's particular circumstances

St Paul, in his First Letter to the Corinthians, gives us an idea of the impact of God's judgment according to each person's particular circumstances. He says that Christian life is built upon Jesus Christ. If we have stood firm on this foundation and built our life upon it, we know that it cannot be taken away from us even in death.

Paul continues: 'Now if any one builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw - each man's work will become manifest; for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work which any man has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire' (1 Corinthians 3:12-15).

It is evident that our salvation can take different forms, that in order to be saved we may personally have to pass through 'fire' so as to become fully open to receiving God and able to take our place at the table of the eternal marriage-feast.

Christ, Judge and Saviour

Before the gaze of Christ, Judge and Saviour, all falsehood melts away. This encounter, as it burns us, transforms and frees us, allowing us to become truly ourselves. All we have built during our lives can prove to be mere straw - and it collapses. Yet in the pain of this encounter, when the impurity and sickness of our lives become evident to us, lies salvation.

The pain of love

The relation between justice and grace becomes clear: the way we live our lives is not immaterial, but our defilement does not stain us for ever if we have at least continued to reach out towards Christ, towards truth and love. Indeed, it has already been burnt away through Christ's Passion.

The pain of love becomes our salvation and our joy. We cannot calculate the duration of this transforming burning in terms of this world.

The transforming moment of this encounter with Christ the Judge eludes earthly time-reckoning - it is the heart's time,

it is the time of 'passage' to communion with God in the Body of Christ.

The judgment of God is hope, because it is justice and because it is grace.

Abridged from Pope Benedict's encyclical, 'Spe Salvi' (2007), preserving the Pope's original words in the English translation.



Gambian Christian anniversaries

October and November

110 YEARS AGO. Father John Meehan CCSp, who had been ordained in Paris the previous year, arrived in The Gambia on 26th October 1905. His three fellow priests in Banjul at that time were Fr Pierre Wieder and Fr Miesterman, Holy Ghost Fathers from Alsace, northern France, and a Senegambian priest, Fr Gabriel Sanneh, who was *Vicaire de la Paroisse*.

Fr Meehan became Superior in 1908. In January 1932 Fr Meehan was named first 'Ecclesiastical Superior' of the Mission - which until then had been run from Dakar, but was now self-governing.

Fr Meehan retired as Superior in 1946, when he was succeeded by Fr Matthew Farrelly.

He died 61 years ago, on 15th September 1954.

8th October 1878: Death of the Superior, Fr Renoux, who had arrived only six months earlier, on 11th April.

15th October 1884: Opening of Bethel Methodist Church in Stanley Street Banjul.

28th October 1932: Arrival of Fr McEnnis to manage the schools. But the following April he contacted tuberculosis, and was invalided to Ireland, never to return.

1st October 1933: Ordination in Paris of Fr Thomas Jobe. He celebrated his first Mass in Banjul on 15th October 1934.

21st November 1936: Fr Joseph Charles Mendy arrived from a retreat in Dakar bringing an English priest, Fr Harold Whiteside.

27th October 1938: Arrival of Fr Michael Moloney (later Bishop Moloney).

10th October 1945 (70 years ago): Arrival of Fr James White, who died in The Gambia in February 1996.

1st November 1948: Opening of St Therese's Elementary School, with 114 pupils.

30th November 1951: Fr Moloney was named Prefect of the Mission, which had been designated a Prefecture Apostolic on 15th April that year.

16th October 1952: Arrival of Fr William Costelloe and Fr Reginald Gillooly (the latter now retired in Dublin).

26th October 1958: Enthronement of Bishop Moloney as first Bishop of Banjul.

3rd October 1959: Building began of Stella Maris (Star of the Sea) at Bakau, supervised by Fr James White.

17th November 1961: Publication of a Government Bill to set up the Common Entrance Exam for all publicly-funded secondary schools.



17th October 1962: Founding of Pioneer Total Abstinence Association.

17th October 1966: Arrival of Fr John Hogan.

3rd October 1967: Arrival of Fr Michael Casey (*right*), who last year retired from service in The Gambia.

28th October 1968: Arrival of the first Presentation Sisters, Sr Cecilia and Sr Margaret.

12th November 1968: Arrival of Br Liam Sheridan and Br Benedict Stapleton to begin the technical school in Lamin.

27th October 1970 (45 years ago): Arrival of Fr Robert Ellison (now Bishop Ellison).

11th October 1972: Fr Jphn Sharpe moved to Kunkujang.

12th November 1972: Blessing of the Junior Seminary at Fajara (where the École Française now is). The Director was Fr Pierre Sagna (later, Bishop Sagna). Among the 19 seminarians were Fr Anthony Gabisi and Fr Peter Gomez.

4th November 1976: First meeting to prepare a pastoral plan for the diocese.

29th October 1977: Death of James Ndow, first Gambian Principal of Gambia High School.

31st October 1981: Departure of Fr Michael Murray owing to ill-health.

23rd November 1983: Death in Ireland of Fr Francis Farrell.

23rd November 1984: Arrival of Fr Peter Conaty.

28th October 1988: Arrival of Fr Philip Crowe, ordained in Ireland four months earlier by Bishop Michael Moloney.

18th November 1999: Funeral in Banjul of Tony Blain, former Director of Education, who had died in the USA.



6th November 2000 (15 years ago): President Yahya Jammeh appointed Bishop Michael Cleary an honorary Commander of the Order of the Republic of The Gambia (CRG).

13th November 2000 (15 years ago): Death of Rachel Palmer, former Head of the School of Nursing, Banjul.

13th October 2002: Death in Ireland of Fr Vincent Comer, former Principal of St Peter's Technical High School Lamin, and Vicar-General.

6th October 2005 (10 years ago): Death in Ireland of Sr Benigna Kearney, who had taught in The Gambia for more than 50 years. *See 'Sister Benigna remembered', page 25*

17th November 2007: Bishop Ellison began a three-day pastoral visit to the neighbouring Diocese of Ziguinchor.

24th November 2007: Archbishop Théodore-Adrien Sarr of Dakar was among 23 new cardinals created by Pope Benedict XVI.

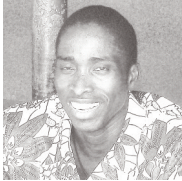
17th October 2008: Death in the USA of Arthur K. Carrol, Methodist who after retiring as head of the Gambia Public Transport Corporation worked for the Catholic charity Caritas. Mr Carrol's funeral was held at Wesley Methodist Church Banjul on 7th November.

10th-18th November 2008: A former GPI Director, Fr Peter Conaty, returned to The Gambia after 20 years to lead a workshop on the liturgy.

21st November 2008: Ordination of Fr John Mendy (*right*) at Farafenni.

29th November 2008: Sr Vivian Aduni, Sr Benedicta Peligabase, Ghanaians, and Sr Marie Sylva, Gambian, made their first profession as Cluny Sisters.

14th November 2009: Ordination of Fr Yenes Manneh at Brikama



1st October 2009: Death in Ireland of Fr Andrew Carroll.

2nd-23rd October 2009: Bishop Ellison was among 244 bishops who took part in the Synod for Africa in Rome.

5th October 2009: Death in Banjul aged 98 of Matilda Ann Faal, who had attended Holy Spirit Banjul every day since its opening.

25th November 2009: Death of Marcel Jinage Badji, Director of St Joseph's Family Farm Bwiam.

1st-10th October 2010 (5 years ago): Sr Calixte Thomas, Sr Josephine Kamada, Sr Teresa Mundow and Sr Jeanne-Therese Ndey joined Cluny Sisters from all over Africa at a synod in Dakar on the implementation of the Synod of African Bishops.

During November 2010 (5 years ago): Death of Sang Gomez, for many years catechist in St Peter's Parish, Lamin.

20th November 2010: President Yahya Jammeh launched 'From Jerusalem to Calvary' by George Gomez (*right*)

29th October 2011: Thanksgiving Mass at the Cathedral for the 50th anniversary of Sr Jeanne-Thérèse Ndeye, first Gambian Sister of St Joseph of Cluny.

10th November 2012: Ordination of Fr Aimé Joseph Colley and Fr Matthew M. Mendy at Lamin

17th November 2012: Sr Barbara Kumangtum from Ghana, Sr Rahel Matandala from Kenya, and Sr Victoria Tholley from Sierra Leone made their first profession at the Novitiate of St Joseph of Cluny at Kanifing.

4th November 2013: The Papal Nuncio, Archbishop Mirosław Adamczyk, presented his letters of credence to President Yahya Jammeh.

9th November 2013: Ordination of Fr Victor Ndecky at Brikama.



Pious practices

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

WATER is essential for almost all plant and animal life on earth. In many religions and cultures it has great symbolic significance, recalling the creation itself. In the very first verses of Genesis, for instance, we are told that, before the earth was formed, 'the Spirit of God moved over the face of the waters'.

Water also symbolises purification and refreshment. Jesus called himself 'living water' (John 7:7-14)

In the Church, water is used for baptism.

Holy water is water that has been blessed by a priest. In some places it is customary to mix salt with the water.

Holy water is kept near the church door in a fixed receptacle known as a stoup. When we enter church we dip our right hand in the stoup and make the sign of the Cross to remind ourselves of our baptism and our life-long commitment to Christ and his Church. Many worshippers also use holy water in this way when leaving the church.

At the beginning of Sunday Mass, instead of the penitential rite, the priest may sprinkle the people with holy water. This rite is known as the 'Asperges': the opening Latin word of the chant from Psalm 50.

The use of holy water is what the Church calls a 'sacramental': a use which is like a sacrament, but is not reckoned among the seven great sacraments of the Church.

Holy water is used also at funerals, when the coffin is sprinkled and incensed.





from beyond the diocese

Francis to visit three African countries in November

POPE Francis will come to Africa for the first time as Pope when he visits Kenya from 25th-27th November, Uganda from 27th-29th November and the Central African Republic from 29th-30th November.

As this *Newsletter* goes to press, the programme for the visits has not been published.

Before his African trip the Pope is to visit Cuba from 19th-22nd September and the United States from 22nd-27th September.

Violence in Mali 'has not disrupted Christian-Muslim ties'

A CATHOLIC aid worker in Mali has said that extremist violence has failed to disrupt friendly ties between Christians and Muslims, and has called for a co-ordinated development strategy as 'the best means to combat extremism'.

'The tensions here aren't between Christians and Muslims: if people are left in peace, they get on as well as they always did,' said Niek de Goeij, country representative for Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in Mali.

He said young people cannot find jobs, and when 'someone comes with a motivating agenda, using religious arguments about fighting some enemy, and offering a gun and \$50 a month, it's easy to see how they get sucked in'.

In June, Mali's government signed a peace agreement with the northern Tuareg and Arab rebels who had hoped to establish a separatist state. The agreement was brokered by Algeria. Under the agreement, northern rebel fighters are to be integrated into government security forces. Regional assemblies are to be elected, but without full autonomy, to prevent separatism.

The agreement was witnessed by Muslim and Christian religious leaders. However, rebel attacks have continued since the agreement was signed.

'The government is still unable to control large areas, and it's very risky to go out of the main towns,' de Goeij said. He added that two CRS staff had been blindfolded and robbed at gunpoint near Timbuktu on 16th August, and continuing attacks by separatist and Islamist insurgents were giving aid agencies 'pause for thought'.

But he said that no pressure was being exerted against Mali's Christian minority by ordinary Muslims, adding that the work of Christian charities was protected by local people.

'People know our work; and our Christian and Catholic identity, far from being a liability, provides an extra protective cloak. This acceptance posture is a real blessing.'

De Goeij went on: 'As in other countries, Christians and Muslims here routinely inter-marry, often undergoing Christian, Muslim and traditional weddings; and communal relations are close. If violence flares, it's usually inter-ethnic rather than inter-religious, involving issues such as water access or animal grazing.'

'Mali's main challenges are to create an accountable democracy for all people nationwide and to get out of the cycle of dependency caused by short-term shocks and disruptions. Very often, a terrorist is a young person looking for a job, who sees his parents toiling on the land to make ends meet and sees no other prospects. If such people had money in the bank, education for their children, access to health care and trust in services, the country would be able to remove the pockets of extremism still existing.'

Bishops call for common EU migrant policy 'without delay'

THE EUROPEAN Union must adopt a common asylum policy 'without delay', because it is unacceptable for refugees to 'drown and suffocate' at the fringes of the bloc, Europe's Catholic bishops have declared.

A statement issued by the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community (COMECE) said a common policy would prevent countries from keeping out migrants.

'If we can solve an economic crisis at an overnight EU extraordinary summit, then it should be just as easy with this crisis, especially when the fate of so many people is at stake,' said the statement. 'After all, the question of a common solution to the refugee crisis is also an issue that directly affects the values and the future of Europe.'

The statement came in response to the mass migration of refugees into Europe throughout 2015. Most of those arriving in Greece are fleeing war in Syria, while thousands of Africans have entered Italy after paying people-smugglers to put them on boats from Libya.

Rather than staying in Greece or Italy, many of the new arrivals try to reach the richer states of northern Europe.

COMECE leaders criticised those EU states which are trying to keep out migrants. 'We cannot accept that people drown and suffocate at the borders of Europe. Building barbed-wire fences and walls to prevent refugees from entering Europe is not a solution. Moreover, it is a Christian duty to help the refugees, whatever their origin or religion.'

Such states include Britain, which has invested in tight security and fencing to stop migrants entering from France through the Channel Tunnel, and Hungary, which is building a fortified fence along its southern border with Serbia.

* *The plight of African migrants crossing the Sahara: page 30*



Syrian assylum-seekers walking along railway lines in Hungary

Francis 'a more influential tweeter than Obama'



Pope and President at the Vatican in 2014

PRESIDENT Obama has the most Twitter followers, but Pope Francis's @Pontifex is more influential: his average 'retweet' and 'favourite' rate is more than eight times higher than Mr Obama's, according to the annual 'Twiplomacy Study' by the public relations firm, Burson Marsteller.

The study says that @BarackObama tweets are on average only retweeted 1,210 times, adding that, by this standard, Pope Francis - @Pontifex - is by far the most influential tweeter with 9,929 retweets for every tweet he sends on his Spanish account and 7,527 retweets on average on his English account.

Pope Francis was also determined 'most influential' by the study in 2014 and 2013. In the category of all-time popular tweets, Pope Francis makes the top three.

The study says that some 86 per cent of the 193 UN member countries have an official presence on Twitter, and 172 heads of state or government, including Pope Francis, have personal accounts on the social network.

Pope Francis's nine different language accounts have more than 19.5 million followers. He has more than 20 million followers on Twitter.

His @Pontifex account on the social media site has versions in English, Spanish, Arabic, French, German, Italian, Polish, Portuguese and Latin.

Cardinal thanks Queen Elizabeth for safeguarding the Christian faith

CARDINAL Vincent Nichols, leader of the Catholics of England and Wales, has written to Queen Elizabeth II to congratulate her on becoming Britain's longest-reigning monarch. He said the Queen had accepted the 'burden of office' at a very young age: '...through the many and varied circumstances of your reign, you have held integrity of service as a high standard and as an exemplar for other heads of state and leaders of nations... We thank you too, for your steadfast insistence on the great importance of our Christian faith, given in both word and example, alongside your appreciation of the contribution made by other religions in our rich and diverse society today... The Gospel of Jesus, which we seek to serve, is a challenge to our society to think more deeply about the sanctity of life, the constant need for forgiveness and reconciliation, and the faithfulness required in love and the self-sacrifice which brings true satisfaction...

'May Almighty God bless Your Majesty, preserve you in health of mind and body, and grant you every grace and blessing, now and in the years to come.'

Vatican invites priests to apply to become 'missionaries of mercy'

POPE Francis is looking for 'missionaries of mercy': priests known for their preaching and dedication to hearing confessions and granting absolution.

Priests interested in being one of the special communicators of God's mercy are invited to apply on-line, providing that they have the support of their bishop or superior.

The Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelisation, charged by the Pope with co-ordinating the Holy Year of Mercy, which begins on Tuesday 8th December, has posted a list of desired qualities and the application form on the Year of Mercy website.

The missionaries will be commissioned by the Pope and sent out on 10th February - Ash Wednesday - as a 'living sign of the Father's welcome to all those in search of his forgiveness'.

They should be 'inspiring preachers of mercy; heralds of the joy of forgiveness; welcoming, loving and compassionate confessors, who are most especially attentive to the difficult situations of each person'.

With an invitation from a local bishop, the missionaries will preach and administer the sacrament of reconciliation during Year of Mercy events.

When Pope Francis announced the Holy Year of Mercy, he said he would give the missionaries of mercy special authority 'to pardon even those sins reserved to the Holy See'.

Bishop Juan Ignacio Arrieta, Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts, said the reference to 'reserved' sins refers to actions that can bring with them automatic excommunication, for example, abortion when the person is aware of the penalty, but still commits the sin.

If the person is repentant, he said, the missionaries will be able to remove the excommunication and grant absolution in those cases which normally require the intervention or permission of the local bishop or the Apostolic Penitentiary, a Vatican court.

German Catholic numbers decline

FIGURES published by the German Catholic Bishops' Conference shows that 217,716 left the Church last year.

The number leaving the Church in 2014 was 22 per cent higher than in the previous year, going from 178,805 to 217,716.

In Germany, if a person is baptised he or she is liable to pay the Church tax - an arrangement established in the 19th century. It is believed that this tax motivates many to make a formal renunciation of their faith; but it is thought that only about a third of German Catholics actually pay the tax.

Cardinal Reinhard Marx, Chairman of the German Bishops' Conference, said: 'Behind the Church withdrawals are personal decisions that we in each case profoundly regret, but also respect the freedom of choice.'

Despite more than 820,000 people leaving the Church over the last five years, the Bishops' Conference recorded almost 24 million Catholics in Germany - nearly 30 per cent of the population. Nevertheless, the exodus of 2014 was particularly large, representing an increase of more than 50 per cent in the number of Germans who left the Church in comparison to 1990.

Mary our Mother: sign of hope and comfort

The homily of Bishop ROBERT ELLISON CSSp for the Solemnity of the Assumption 2015



A WHOLE year has gone by since we celebrated the centenary of our Cathedral Church, which is dedicated to our Lady assumed into heaven.

This year, for the first time, I was struck by the Collect prayer of this Mass. It gives us a simple and concise insight into the mystery which we celebrate each year on this day:

All powerful God, you raised the sinless Virgin Mary body and soul to the glory of heaven. May we see heaven as our final goal and come to share her glory...

Yes, Mary was given the unique privilege of being assumed body and soul into heaven. No other human being has ever reached this goal of perfect glory that Mary enjoys. That privilege was given to her due to the unique role she fulfilled from the Annunciation until Pentecost. And now she continues to be our mother until that day we reach our final goal in glory.

‘When the course of her earthly life was ended’

There is no special Gospel story for the Solemnity of the Assumption of Mary into heaven. This has often caused some uncertainty about this belief.

When we go back to the life of the very early Church, there is little evidence as to what happened exactly to Our Lady at the end of her earthly life. It was only in the year 1950 that Pope Pius XII officially proclaimed that Mary, Mother of God, was taken up body and soul into the glory of heaven ‘when the course of her earthly life was ended’.

It is worth noting the last words in the Pope’s statement: ‘...at the end of Mary’s earthly life’. In this way, he avoided using the words ‘when she died’. Thus, he made this solemn statement of faith and put all former doubts or opinions to rest.

It is probable that no other teaching of the Church was ever proclaimed as a result of so much consultation as the dogma of the Assumption. Bishops, priests, religious and lay faithful were all invited to express their belief about this teaching. In fact, it was the lay faithful who were foremost in lobbying for this solemn teaching of our faith: a tradition that goes back longer than 1,500 years.

To this day, we cannot say where or when or how Mary ‘died’ – if indeed she actually ‘died’ at all in the usual way. There is no tomb which points to her burial place. Pilgrims to the Holy Land usually want to see important places, or shrines of saints, that they know from the Bible. But I have never heard a pilgrim ask for her tomb, or to complain that they were unable to pray at the tomb of Mary!

Peace and tranquility

A traditional memory or image of Mary’s ‘death’ has always been one of peace and tranquility. It is referred to as the ‘dormition’ or ‘falling asleep’ of Mary. A great basilica in Rome, the Basilica of St Mary Major, was dedicated to Our Lady during the 5th century. It was erected in honour of the solemn proclamation of Mary as Mother of God during the Council of Ephesus in AD 431.

In the sanctuary of this basilica there is a beautiful mosaic [see opposite page] which portrays Mary being elevated by angels from earth to heaven in a horizontal position, while the apostles look on in wonder and awe.

The early Christian community expressed its faith more often through the medium of art rather than words. The proverb ‘a picture is worth more than a thousand words’ makes a lot of sense. This mosaic of Our Lady being taken up to heaven body and soul is a powerful expression of the faith of those early Christians in her Assumption.

And that faith has always been maintained down the centuries: until the lay faithful in particular openly called for what we now know as the solemn teaching of the Assumption since the 20th century.

Between the Ascension and Pentecost

The last reference to Mary in the Bible is during the ten days between the Ascension and Pentecost. As soon as Jesus disappeared from the sight of his disciples on the Mount of Olives, Luke describes how fragile and helpless they became.

Two angels appeared to give them a jolt! ‘Why are you men from Galilee standing here looking into the sky?’ With that, they went back to the Upper Room in Jerusalem as Jesus had told them: ‘I will not leave you orphans; wait there until you will be baptised by the power of the Holy Spirit.’

During those ten days the disciples were joined in continuous prayer, together with several women, including Mary, the mother of Jesus.

A question has sometimes been raised: Would the disciples have stayed those nine days in that Upper Room waiting for the Spirit to come, if Mary had not been present among them?

Mary and the family

Let us pray to Our Lady assumed into heaven in a special way this year, for the second part of our Synod on Marriage and Family Life.

We believe that family life is the foundation stone of a stable and responsible society. The absence of this has been, unfortunately, the source of so much pain, brokenness and violence across the world. May Mary our Mother be for us a sign of hope and comfort as we try to bring together our families and friends; especially those in need of our support and encouragement.



Gate of Heaven, pray for us.

Morning Star, pray for us.

Refuge of sinners, pray for us.

Comforter of the afflicted, pray for us.

Queen assumed into heaven, pray for us.

Queen of Peace, watch over our families, our communities, our country and Head of State, along with his government.



The Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome

THE BASILICA of St Mary Major, one of the four ancient basilicas in Rome, was founded in the 4th century. Its bell tower is the tallest in Rome. It owes its beginnings to a particular event and one man. At the Council of Ephesus in AD431, Mary was declared 'Mother of God'. The man was Sixtus III, the Pope who, several years after this declaration, wanted a church dedicated to the Virgin Mary. After more than 1,500 years and despite the additions and modifications in the interior and exterior, the basilica is fundamentally the one of

Sixtus II. It is the first, the greatest, the largest, and the most important Church dedicated to the Mother of God, the *Theotokos*.

'The Dormition of Mary', one of the 'Twelve Great Feasts' of Orthodox Christians, is also celebrated on 15th August.



The Dormition of Mary as depicted in Santa Maria Maggiore

Remembering Sister Benigna

A life dedicated to God and The Gambia

TEN years ago, on 6th October 2005, Sister Benigna Kearny, who had spent over 50 years as a teacher in The Gambia, died peacefully in Ireland.

Sr Benigna was born in County Kerry, Ireland, on All Saints' Day, 1st November 1922. She had one brother and five sisters, and attended primary school in Mount Sackville, Dublin.

Sr Benigna joined the novitiate of the Sisters of St Joseph of Cluny in Ferbane, County Offaly. She was professed in March 1944, and proceeded to University College Dublin.

After graduation, St Benigna was posted to The Gambia to teach at St Joseph's High School Banjul. She taught mathematics, Latin, English literature, Catholic religious education and history, along with music.

In addition to this heavy and varied teaching programme, Sr Benigna was active in the Legion of Mary and the Catholic Girls' Club, and in visiting the psychiatric hospital, the home for the infirm, the sanatorium and the prisons.



Former pupils remember Sr Benigna's lively music and drama productions. On Fridays, armed with her guitar, she went to Holy Spirit Church Banjul to lead singing with St Joseph's and St Augustine's pupils.

In 1970 she took a course at the University of Southampton in England to update herself in the 'new maths' then being introduced in schools.

After further service at St Joseph's, Sr Benigna was transferred to Darsilami, from where she travelled daily to teach at St Peter's High School Lamin.

Later, she started the Cluny Nursery School in Banjul, and taught there for many years.

With the late Sr Albert Byrne she initiated an adult literacy programme.

For health reasons, Sr Benigna had to return to Ireland. She continued to serve her Congregation there and in England.

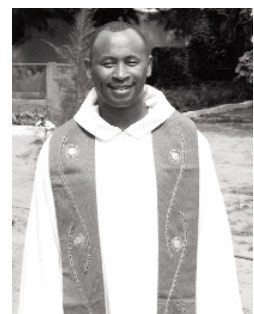
Sr Benigna's niece Martina came from Ireland to attend the Requiem Mass offered at the Cathedral in Banjul on Friday 14th October 2005, thirteen days after Sr Benigna's death.



Do you know?

- 1 Which king of Israel built the Temple in Jerusalem?
- 2 How many dioceses are there in Senegal?
- 3 Which New Testament writer declared, 'How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! And the tongue is a fire...no one can tame the tongue.?'
- 4 What is a synagogue?
- 5 What name is given to the narrow vestment worn by a priest on the shoulders, hanging down in front - as pictured right?

Answers on page 29





ALL BRANCHES OPEN TO THE PUBLIC NOW

OPEN FROM MONDAYS TO SATURDAYS: 8:30am to 8:00pm

50 KAIRABA AVENUE - Telephone: 4399144, 4378489

LIST OF BRANCHES & IMPLANTS

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



Daily Mass Readings



Sunday readings Year B Weekday readings Year 1

Thu 1st October	Nehemiah 5:1-4,5-12. Psalm 19:8-11. Luke 10:1-12	St Therese of Lisieux
Fri 2nd	Exodus 23:23-25. Psalm 91?. Matthew 18:1-5,10	Holy Guardian Angels <i>abstinence</i> (of the BVM)
Sat 3rd	Baruch 4:5-12,27-29. Psalm 69:33-37. Luke 10:17-24	
Sun 4th	Genesis 2:18-24. Psalm 128:1-6. Hebrews 2:9-11. Mark 10:2-16	27th SUNDAY of YEAR
Mon 5th	Jonah 1:2 -2:2,10. Psalm Jonah 2:3-5,8. Luke 10:25-37	(St Bruno)
Tue 6th	Jonah 3:1-10. Psalm 130:1-4,7-8. Luke 10:38-42	Our Lady of the Rosary
Wed 7th	Acts 1:12-14. Magnificat. Luke 1:26-38	
Thu 8th	Malachi 3:13-20. Psalm 1:1-4,6. Luke 11:5-13	(St Denis <i>or</i> Blessed John Henry Newman) <i>abstinence</i> (of the BVM)
Fri 9th	Joel 1:13-15; 2:1-2. Psalm ?? 9:2-3,6 & 16:8-9. Luke 11:15-26	
Sat 10th	Joel 4:12-21. Psalm 97:1-2,5-6,11-12. Luke 11:27-28	
Sun 11th	Wisdom 7:7-11. Psalm 90:12-17. Hebrews 4:12=13. Mark 10:17-30	28th SUNDAY of YEAR
Mon 12th	Romans 1:1-7. Psalm 98:1-4. Luke 11:29-32	
Tue 13th	Romans 1:16-25. Psalm 19:2-5. Luke 11:37-41	(St Callistus)
Wed 14th	Romans 2:1-11. Psalm 62:2-3,6-7,9. Luke 11: 42-46	St Teresa of Jesus
Thu 15th	Romans 3:21-30. Psalm 130:1-6. Luke 11:47-54	(St Hedwig <i>or</i> St Margaret Mary Alacoque) <i>abstinence</i> St Ignatius of Antioch
Fri 16th	Romans 4:1-8. Psalm 32:1-2,5-11. Luke 12:1-7	
Sat 17th	Romans 4:13,16-18. Psalm 105: 6-9,42-43. Luke 12:8-12	
Sun 18th	Isaiah 53:10-11. Psalm 33:4-5,18-29,22. Hebrews 4:14-16. Mark 10:35-45	29th SUNDAY of YEAR
Mon 19th	Romans 4:20-25. Psalm Luke 1:69-75. Luke 12:13-21.	(St John de Brebeuf <i>or</i> St Paul of the Cross)
Tue 20th	Romans 5:12,15,17-21. Psalm 40:7-10,17. Luke 12:35-38	
Wed 21st	Romans 6:12-18. Psalm 124:1-8. Luke 12:39-48	(St John Paul II)
Thu 22nd	Romans 6:19-23. Psalm 1:1-4,6. Luke 12:49-53	(St John of Capistrano) <i>abstinence</i> (St Antony Mary Claret <i>or</i> of the BVM)
Fri 23rd	Romans 7:18-25. Psalm 119:66,68,76,77,93,94. Luke 12:54-59	
Sat 24th	Romans 8:1-11. Psalm 24:1-6. Luke 13:1-9	
Sun 25th	Jeremiah 7-9. Psalm 126:1-6. Hebrews 5:1-6. Mark 10:46-52	30th SUNDAY of YEAR
Mon 26th	Romans 8:12-17. Psalm 68:2,4,6-7,20-21. Luke 13:10-17	
Tue 27th	Romans 8:18-25. Psalm 126:1-6. Luke 13:18-21	St SIMON and St JUDE
Wed 28th	Ephesians 2:19-22. Psalm 19:2-5. Luke 6:12-16	<i>abstinence</i>
Thu 29th	Romans 8:31-39. Psalm 109:21-22,26-27,30-31. Luke 13:37-35	
Fri 30th	Romans 9:1-5. Psalm 147:12-15,19-20. Luke 14:1-6	
Sat 31st	Romans 11:1-2,11-12,25-29. Psalm 94:12-15,17-18. Luke 14:1,7-11	
Sun 1st November	Revelation 7:2-4,9-14. Psalm 46:2-3,5-6, 8-9. 1 John 3;1-3. Matthew 5:1-12	ALL SAINTS
Mon 2nd	Isaiah 25:6-9. Psalm 27 Mark 15:33-39 & 16:1-6 (<i>various alternative readings provided</i>)	ALL SOULS
Tue 3rd	Romans 12:5-16. Psalm 131:1-3. Luke 14:15-24	(St Martin de Porres) St Charles Borromeo
Wed 4th	Romans 13:8-10. Psalm 112:1-2,4-5,9. Luke 14:25-33	<i>abstinence</i> (of the BVM)
Thu 5th	Romans 14:7-12. Psalm 27:1,4,13-14. Luke 15:1-10	
Fri 6th	Romans 15:14-21. Psalm 98:1-4. Luke 16:1-8	
Sat 7th	Romans 16:3-9,16,22-27. Psalm 146:7-10. Luke 16:9-15	
Sun 8th	1 Kings 17:10-16. Psalm 146:7-10. Hebrews 9:24-28. Mark 12:35-44	32nd SUNDAY of YEAR
Mon 9th	Ezekiel 47:1-2,8-9,12. Psalm 46:2-3,5-6,8-9. 1 Corinthians 3:9-11,16-17. John 2:13-22	St John Lateran
Tue 10th	Wisdom 2:23 - 3:9. Psalm 34:2-3,16-19. Luke 17:7-10	St Leo the Great
Wed 11th	Wisdom 6:1-11. Psalm 82:3-4,6-7. Luke 17:11-19	St Martin of Tours
Thu 12th	Wisdom 7:22 - 8:1. Psalm 119:89-91,130,135,175. Luke 17:20-25	(St Josaphat) <i>abstinence</i> (of the BVM)
Fri 13th	Wisdom 13:1-9. Psalm 19:2-5. Luke 17:26-37	
Sat 14th	Wisdom 18:14-16; 19:6-9. Psalm 105:2-3,36-37,42-43. Luke 18:1-8	
Sun 15th	Daniel 12:1-3. Psalm 16:5.8-10. Hebrews 10:11-14,18. Mark 13:24-32	33rd SUNDAY of YEAR
Mon 16th	1 Maccabees 1:10-15,41-43,54-57,62-63. Psalm 119:53,61,134,150,155,158.	Luke 18:35-43 (St Margaret of Scotland) (St Elizabeth of Hungary)
Tue 17th	2 Maccabees 6:18-31. Psalm 3:2-7. Luke 19:1-10	
Wed 18th	2 Maccabees 7:20-31. Psalm 17:1,5-6, 8,15. Luke 19:11-28	(Dedication of Baslica of St Peter & St Paul)
Thu 19th 1	<i>or, for Peter & Paul:</i> Acts 28:11-16.30-31. Psalm 98:1-6. Matthew 14:22-23	
Fri 20th 1	Maccabees 2:15-29. Psalm 50:1-2,5-6,14-15. Luke 19:41-44	<i>abstinence</i>
Sat 21st	Maccabees 4:36-37,52-59. Psalm 1 Corinthians 29:10-12. Luke 19:45-48	Presentation of Mary
Zechariah 2:10-13. Psalm ?? Matthew 12:46-50		
Sun 22nd	Daniel 7:13-14. Psalm 93:1-2,5. Revelation 1:5-8. John 18:33-37	CHRIST the KING
Mon 23rd	Daniel 1:1-6,8-20. Psalm Daniel 3:52-56. Luke 21:1-4	(St Clement <i>or</i> St Columbian) St Andrew Dung-Lac (St Catherine of Alexandria)
Tue 24th	Daniel 2:31-45. Psalm Daniel 3:57-61. Luke 21:5-19	<i>abstinence</i> (of the BVM)
Wed 25th	Daniel 6:12-28. Psalm Daniel 3:62-67. Luke 21:12-19	
Thu 26th	Daniel 6:12-28. Psalm Daniel 3:68=74. Luke 21:20-28.	
Fri 27th	Daniel 7:2-14. Psalm Daniel 3:75-81. Luke 21:29-33	
Sat 28th	Daniel 7:15-27. Psalm Daniel 3:82-87. Luke 21:34-36	

29th November (1st Sunday of Advent) & Monday 30th (St Andrew): see December/January Newsletter

Some weekday celebrations in October & November



Thursday 1st October: St Therese of Lisieux *doctor of the Church*

THERESE was born in 1873 in Alençon, France, the youngest of nine children. When she was four, her mother died; and her father, a watch-maker, moved to Lisieux. She wanted to follow two of her sisters in the religious life, but was told she was too young. She persisted, and in 1888 was admitted as a Carmelite nun. Therese is known for her 'Little Way', which asserts that it is not necessary to achieve 'great deeds' to become holy. 'I see that it is enough to realise one's nothingness and give oneself wholly, like a child, into the arms of the loving God.' Therese suffered from tuberculosis, and died aged only 24 on 30th September 1897. Her autobiography, *L'histoire d'une âme* ('The story of a soul') was edited by her sister Pauline and published after Therese's death. It became a best-seller. Therese was canonised in

1925. In this diocese we pray especially today for the priest and people of the parish of St Therese Kanifing.

Wednesday 7th October: Our Lady of the Rosary

OCTOBER is the month of the Holy Rosary. We are reminded to meditate on the mysteries of Christ following the example of Mary, who was associated with her Son's incarnation, ministry, passion and resurrection. In this diocese we pray today for the people of the Church of the Holy Rosary, Lamin, opened in April 1995.

Friday 9th October: Blessed John Henry Newman *priest*

JOHN Henry Newman (1801-1890) was an Anglican priest who became a leader of the Oxford Movement, a group of Anglicans who wished to return the Church of England to Catholic beliefs and practices. In 1845 he left the Church of England and was received into the Roman Catholic Church, where he was eventually made a Cardinal by Pope Leo XIII. He was instrumental in founding the Catholic University of Ireland, which evolved into University College Dublin. Newman was beatified by Pope Benedict XVI in September 2010, during his visit to the United Kingdom. Newman's writings include his autobiography *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* ('A Defence of My Life' 1866). He wrote the popular hymns 'Lead, kindly light', 'Praise to the Holiest in the height' and 'Firmly I believe and truly'. Newman is the patron of the English Ordinariate, set up by Benedict XVI for former Anglicans who are in full communion with Rome while retaining some Anglican forms of worship.



Tuesday 13th October: St Edward *king and confessor*

EDWARD (1004-66), King of England, was renowned for second-sight, curing scrofula and generosity to the poor. He founded Westminster Abbey, the best-known church in England. The title 'confessor' is given to an outstanding witness to the Gospel. It was conferred on Edward in his lifetime by Pope Alexander II. Edward's tomb at Westminster Abbey was a place of pilgrimage until the Reformation, as it has become again in modern times. Pope Benedict XVI prayed there in September 2010 with the Archbishop of Canterbury. In this diocese, the school at Bwiam is named in St Edward's honour, and today we pray for past and present teachers and pupils of that school.

Thursday 15th October: St Teresa of Avila *doctor of the Church*

TERESA was born in Avila, Spain, in 1515. She joined the Carmelite Order and received mystic revelations. She underwent many trials in reforming her order. Her writings are marked by a deep understanding of doctrine. She died in 1582. She is one of the patron saints of Spain.

Saturday 17th October: St Ignatius of Antioch *bishop and martyr*

IGNATIUS succeeded the Apostle Peter as second Bishop of Antioch (in present-day Turkey). During the reign of the Roman Emperor Trajan he was arrested and sent to Rome. On his way to execution he wrote letters encouraging fellow-Christians to remain faithful despite persecution. He met his death by being thrown to wild animals.

Monday 19th October: St Jean de Brébeuf and his companions *martyrs*

JEAN de Brébeuf was born in Normandy, France, in 1593, and ordained a Jesuit priest in 1622. Three years later he went with others to Quebec, in Canada, to become a missionary. The Huron Indians were awed by his height and strength, but he made few converts except among the dying - particularly during a smallpox epidemic in 1636. During a war between the French and British, de Brébeuf had to return to France for two years. In 1648 he was captured by a rival tribe, tortured and forced to run naked through the snow. Red-hot blades were thrust down his throat. His nose was cut off, and boiling water was poured over him in mockery of Christian baptism. Then he was scalped and his heart torn from his body. Seven other missionaries were similarly martyred before and after him.



Thursday 22nd October: St John Paul II pope

JOHN Paul II was born Karol Józef Wojtyła in Poland. He was elected to replace John Paul I, who had succeeded Pope Paul VI, but died in 1978 after only 33 days in office.

John Paul II was the first non-Italian Pope since the Dutchman, Adrian VI (1522-1523).

He helped to end Communist rule in Poland and eventually all Europe. He improved the Church's relations with Judaism, Islam, the Eastern Orthodox and the Anglican Communion. He was one of the most travelled leaders in history, visiting 129 countries during his pontificate. He canonised 483 saints - more than all his predecessors combined during the preceding five centuries. He died in 2005. John Paul II was the second longest-serving Pope after Pope Pius IX (1846-1878). On 19th December 2009 John Paul II was proclaimed Venerable by Pope Benedict XVI.

John Paul II was beatified on 1st May 2011 following the attribution of a miracle to his intercession: the healing of a French nun from Parkinson's disease. A second miracle attributed to John Paul was approved in July 2013 (two miracles must be attributed to a person's intercession to be declared a saint) He was canonised by Pope Francis on 27th April 2014, together with Pope John XXIII.

**Wednesday 28th October: St Simon & St Jude apostles**

LITTLE is known of **Simon** except that he was born in Cana and was known as the Zealot.

Jude, known also as **Thaddæus**, asked Jesus at the Last Supper why he showed himself only to the apostles and not to the world (John 14: 22).

Wednesday 4th November: St Charles Borromeo bishop

CHARLES was nobly born in 1583 at Arona (in present-day Italy) and was known in his youth for his saintly life and academic ability. When he was 23 his uncle, Pope Pius IV (1559-65), made him Cardinal Archbishop of Milan. Charles gave his inheritance to the poor. His efforts to revive the spiritual zeal of the clergy made him enemies. During the plague of 1575 he relieved distress and gave the last rites to the dying. Charles founded the Order of Oblates. He fought hard to eradicate Protestantism from his diocese. He died in 1584.

Monday 9th November: Dedication of St John Lateran

THE POPE'S cathedral as Bishop of Rome is not St Peter's Basilica, but the Basilica of St John Lateran, dedicated in 324. At first, this feast was celebrated only in Rome, but later it became universal. St John Lateran is known as the 'mother of all churches in the city and the world'. Today's feast celebrates Catholic unity and our regard for the See of Rome.

**Tuesday 10th November: St Leo the Great pope**

LEO was born towards the end of the 4th century in Tuscany (part of present-day Italy). As Pope from 440 to 451 he championed orthodoxy. When the monk Eutyches of Constantinople asserted that Christ had only a divine nature, Leo wrote his 'tome' insisting that Christ was true God and true man. Leo's teachings as the 'voice of Peter' were embraced by the Council of Chalcedon, and his example, letters and sermons contributed to the growth of papal authority.

Saturday 21st November: Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

TODAY commemorates the dedication in 543 of the Church of Our Lady in Jerusalem. We honour Mary's dedication of herself to God from her childhood by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who filled her with grace at her Immaculate Conception. We give especial thanks on this day for the prayers and work in The Gambia since 1964 of the Presentation Sisters.

Tuesday 24th November: St Andrew Dung-Lac & companions martyrs

BORN in 1795, Andrew was a priest in Vietnam, his homeland. In 1839 he was arrested and beheaded. Between 1820 and 1862, 117 Christians in Vietnam were similarly martyred. In 1988 they were canonised by St John Paul II.



Sancti et Sanctae Dei, intercedete pro nobis

Holy men and women of God, pray for us

Answers to 'Do you know?' (page 25)

- 1 Solomon, son of David (2 Chronicles, chapters 2 & 3)
- 2 Seven: Dakar (the Archdiocese), St Louis du Sénégal, Kaolack, Tambacounda, Thiès, Kolda and Ziguinchor.
- 3 St James (James 3:1-12)
- 4 Jewish place of worship
- 5 Stole: the colour worn varies according to the day or season.

End
Piece

Caught between suffering and hope

Father **AGBONKHIANMEGH E. OROBATOR SJ** writes about the swelling numbers of migrants who risk crossing the Sahara and the Mediterranean



No prospects?

FINDING a decent job in a society that had given up on him was no longer an option. At 33, Awaso (not his real name, nor his actual photo) was a loser in every sense of the word. A high-school drop-out in West Africa, he had tried his hand at everything possible – including petty theft – to earn a living and raise a family.

As one door after another closed on his dream for a better life, he set his sights on Europe. It was the next logical thing to do. Several of his ne'er-do-well schoolmates had done the same thing - and it had worked. One with whom he kept in touch regularly sent photographs of himself proudly posing beside a luxury car. And there was the bi-monthly ritual of his friend's relatives in town going to the Western Union money transfer kiosk to collect remittances from abroad.

Awaso was determined to make it to Europe.

The going rate

Awaso asked me for help because I knew him well. He needed US\$600 (about D27,000) to pay his passage from West Africa northwards across the Sahara. That was the going rate for a place on the migrants' caravan to the shores of the Mediterranean.

Awaso explained the route, which I presumed the people smugglers had coached him to say, but he was cautious not to name his 'sponserer', as he referred to his people smuggler. It would take five days to trek across the Sahara.

Awaso would be provided with a small bag of garri (a gritty, dry cassava meal, like cous-cous), a measure of groundnuts and some water. The 'sponserers' would take care of any obstacles along through the Sahelian countries.

From Libya to Europe

Once across the Sahara, Awaso would board a ship from Libya to Europe. He made it sound like a simple journey, claiming that many of his friends had successfully migrated by the same route.

But I didn't have the money. Even if I had done, I was convinced that nobody could survive a five-day trek in the Sahara. I tried to talk him out of it, but he wouldn't be deterred.

Six months later I received a letter from Awaso, post-marked Libya. He reported that he'd made it to Libya and was waiting for a passage to Europe as soon as he could make enough money by working for locals.

I read his letter in disbelief. What would lead a person to trek the Sahara with only a bag of garri and no guarantee of survival?

No matter how dangerous...

Nowadays, Awaso's story is not unusual. But there is no typical migrant. Each person has his or her unique story, sometimes genuine, sometimes fabricated to win sympathy. The majority are forced to flee conflict and persecution. Commonly, though, each one is looking for a chance in life, to dwell in safety, security and peace, no matter how dangerous it would be to get that chance. For those like Awaso, the ultimate hurdle is the death-defying trek over the Sahara and the perilous passage across the Mediterranean.

The queue gets longer

Back to the story of Awaso. He eventually made the crossing with his wife, and they now live in southern Europe. On occasion I talk to him and his wife and their son.

Awaso's new-found European home offers him all that his own country never could. Like the rest of his family abroad, he makes a modest living and prides himself on paying taxes. He will probably never be rich, but he will have enough to raise a family and put food on their table. That's all he could ever hope for.

His wife is a little more successful. She is now legally resident in Europe. With what she earns she is able to educate her two children still in West Africa. She recently completed paying for a five-bedroom house in her home town and takes care of the needs of the rest of her family. For many young West Africans I know who have sought asylum in Europe, their meagre earnings are a priceless lifeline for their families left behind. And because of their relative success, the queue of would-be migrants gets longer.

People like Awaso and his family abound in Europe. Their profile and motivation fit the description given by Pope Francis: 'They are men and women like us, our brothers and sisters who seek a better life; hungry, persecuted, injured, exploited, victims of war – they seek a better life. They were seeking happiness.'

The telephone call that may never come

Awaso is the lucky one. I know some families in West Africa who are still waiting for word from their son or daughter who took the trans-Saharan route in search of a better life. It's a nerve-racking ordeal waiting for that first telephone call from Europe. Some have waited ten years. Considering the number of migrants who have perished in the Mediterranean, that call may never come. Nor is there any official count of those who die in the Sahara.

The British columnist Katie Hopkins in the Sun newspaper shockingly described them as ‘cockroaches’ and ‘plagues’ to be fended off with gunboats. Whatever the illogicality of her arguments, such comments incite hatred of migrants, dehumanise them and distort the reality of migration.

Europe’s double-game

The phenomenon of migration is not a single story. The untold part of the saga is that European (and North American) countries play a double-game. At the same time as they try to shut out the likes of Awaso, they have in place policies that actively encourage bright and skilled men and women to settle in Europe.

I know six medical doctors who have left West Africa in the past few years and now work in Europe and North America. These highly-qualified professionals were trained with the meagre resources of African countries, where they will never apply their skills.

Such arrangements perpetuate a cycle on under-development that leaves African governments more impoverished and incapable of investing in their youth.

The European Union’s response to the issue of migrants has been to focus on deterrence. Yet given the desperation of migrants – and the sophistication of the people smugglers – this policy can always be circumvented by clever criminal gangs eager to protect their market share of the trafficking business.

As Eneke the bird says in Chinua Achebe’s novel, ‘Things Fall Apart’: ‘Because people have learnt to shoot without missing, I have learnt to fly without perching.’



Joint strategies?

Besides, deterrence does not distinguish between migrants. Unlike Awaso, the majority are fleeing persecution and conflict.

If the EU has resources to invest in deterrence, it would do well to also explore joint strategies with countries that generate migrants and others where facilitation of their journey is a booming business. Without improvements to the local economies and an end to violent internal conflicts, the waves of people risking their lives on a treacherous journey to Europe will continue to swell.

Like Awaso, caught between suffering and hope, their trek across the Sahara and the Mediterranean is a risk worth taking. They have nothing to lose.

Taken from The Tablet newspaper; London.

Fr Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator SJ is a Nigerian Jesuit and Principal of Hekima University College, Nairobi, Kenya.

3 TO 5 YEARS OF SAVING MAKES YOU HAVE ENOUGH BLOCKS FOR YOUR HOME.

HIGH QUALITY BLOCKS GUARANTEED.

INTEREST PAID IN BLOCKS WHEN YOU SAVE FOR 12 MONTHS

WE SEND OUT MONTHLY STATEMENTS OF BLOCKS SAVED.

“Start Saving Blocks Towards your House on a Monthly Basis”

GAMBIA’S FIRST CEMENT BLOCK SAVING SCHEME

START BUILDING YOUR HOME FOR AS LOW AS D500 TO D5,000 A MONTH

Amiscus Horizon
 “Home building made affordable”

Info@amiscus.gm - www.amiscus.gm - 9901813, 7051233, 3908784
 Centenary House (Opposite Castle Petrol Station - Westfield) 3rd Floor, Westfield, KSMD, The Gambia



The Widow's Offering

As he taught, Jesus said, 'Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and to be greeted with respect in the market-places, and to have the best seats in the synagogues, and places of honour at banquets! They devour widows' houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.'

He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury.

Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny.

Then Jesus called his disciples and said to them, 'Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For all of them have contributed out of their abundance, but she, out of her poverty, has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.'

Mark 12:41-44

Gospel reading for the 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time, 8th November