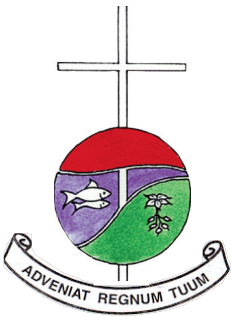


The encounter that can change our lives

Pope Francis' message to young people



The Diocese of Banjul NEWSLETTER

Incorporating The Catholic Newsletter



Daily nourishment
how to pray the rosary

Remembering
the faithful departed



Holy Teresa, pray for us
Mother Teresa is declared a saint



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By way of introduction

Love of God and neighbour



SURELY every reader of this *Newsletter* knows well that it is the duty of all Catholics to attend Holy Mass every Sunday and Holyday of Obligation. From this stems everyone's duty to offer morning and evening prayer every day, using the prayers of the Church and our personal prayers.

A further duty is to fulfill the Law quoted by Jesus from Deuteronomy and Leviticus: 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength... You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' (Mark 12:30-31; Deuteronomy 6:5; Leviticus 19:18). Love of God leads to love of neighbour: living with others in peace, and thinking of their welfare.

We may use the word 'charity' lightly, meaning the giving money to the Church and to those in need. But the exercise of charity means much more.

Charity demands no less than a whole life of self-giving: a life spent in loving God and regarding everyone we meet as a child of God, made in his image, deserving our sympathy, understanding - and in some cases, our help.

Because God is truth, nothing is hidden from him. All our life, every daily action, should relate to what Christ has taught

us and expects of us.

That is why every time we feed the hungry, welcome the stranger, succour the sick, visit the prisoner

- even when we simply offer a smile and a greeting - we are obeying Christ's command, 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'

We should recognise Christ, supreme representative of the human race and image of the Godhead, in everyone we meet. Then, in due course, Christ will say to us, 'Just as you did it to one of the least of my brothers, you did it to me.' (Matthew 25:40).

Going to Sunday Mass, saying our daily prayers, obeying Our Lord's command to love and serve others, are always important. As we approach elections in our country, solidarity with others, mutual respect and obligations based on love of God and neighbour are prerequisites for the continuation of the peace we enjoy, and the common good, 'to The Gambia ever true'.

Understanding eggs

page 10



The Catholic Church is growing as never before!

page 30



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Here & there

NEWS FROM AROUND THE DIOCESE

Diocesan Celebrations in 2017

3rd April: 40th anniversary of the first publication of the Diocese of Banjul Newsletter – on Palm Sunday 1977

14th June: 60th anniversary of the creation by Pius XII of the Diocese of Banjul – on 14th June 1957



Pius XII



Bishop Moloney



Fr Grimes

THE DIOCESE of Banjul was created by Pope Pius XII on 14th June 1957, but there had already been continuous Catholic missionary activity in The Gambia for 111 years - since 1846.

For many years the mission was served largely by Holy Ghost fathers from France, and was supervised from Dakar.

In 1905 Fr John Meehan, a Holy Ghost missionary from Ireland, became Superior, a post he held until 1948.

In 1931 the mission was declared sui juris - self-governing.

The final stage towards diocesan status was achieved on 15th April 1951, when the mission was upgraded to a Prefecture Apostolic. The first Prefect Apostolic was Monsignor Michael Moloney CSSp, who had served in The Gambia, largely up-river, since 1938.

On 4th May 1958 Mgr Moloney was episcopally ordained in Dublin. He was Bishop of Banjul for almost 22 years, until 4th April 1980.

He was succeeded by the Right Reverend Michael Cleary CSSp - who, having been episcopally ordained in Banjul - was Bishop from 25th March 1981 until 25th February 2006.

Pope John Paul II visited The Gambia on 23rd February 1992.

Monsignor Robert Patrick Ellison CSSp was episcopally ordained at Bakau Stadium on 14th May 2006.

Bishop Ellison convened a Diocesan Assembly, held from 30th March to 4th April 2008.

Award for GPI cameraman

A 'SPECIAL Movie Award' by Africa Unity TV for 'Best Picture' has been awarded to Abdoulie Korkah Bah of the Communications Unit at GPI.

Mr Bah's award-winning film is called 'Return to Grace'.

Mr Bah has been working at GPI since 2012. His duties include making and editing videos, and camera work for 'Kaadu Dunda Gi' in GPI studios and outside.



Voting in elections

THE DUTIES of Catholics, as citizens, are outlined in the 'Catechism of the Catholic Church'.

'IT is the duty of citizens to contribute along with the civil authority to the good of society in a spirit of truth, justice, solidarity and freedom. The love and service of one's country follow from the duty of gratitude, and belong to the order of charity. Submission to legitimate authorities and the service of the common good requires citizens to fulfil their roles in the life of the political community.' (2239).

'SUBMISSION to authority and co-responsibility for the common good make it obligatory to pay taxes, to exercise the right to vote, and to defend one's country.' (2240)

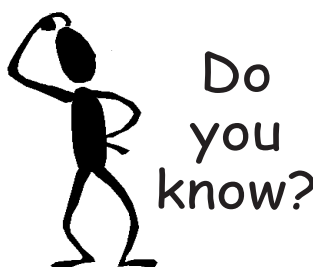
Pay to all what is due to them, taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honour to whom honour is due. (Romans 5:7)

21st October Catholic day of prayer for The Gambia

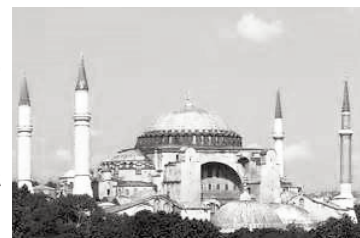
ALL Catholics throughout the Diocese of Banjul have been encouraged to observe Friday 21st October as a day of fasting and prayer for the recognition of rights, security, peace and the religious freedom of all - especially Christians - in The Gambia.

The event was announced by the 'Ad hoc Committee on the Challenges to the Domestic Church', who also ask those observing the day to 'pray for peace in our beloved country, so that God's will be done as we approach the elections on 1st December 2016.'

Late appearance: WE apologise that, because of technical problems and staff leave, the Newsletter for October/November 2016 is appearing late.



- 1 Name the giant champion of the Philistines, slain by David.
- 2 What is the difference between a cross and a crucifix?
- 3 Which Gospel relates the parable of the Good Samaritan?
- 4 What does 'Amen' mean, at the end of a prayer?
- 5 The beautiful building shown on the right was once a church, then a mosque, and now a museum. Where is it, and what it called?



Answers on page 27

Praying for missionaries and those who receive them

**The message of Bishop ROBERT ELLISON CSSp
for Mission Sunday, 16th October 2016**

EVERY year when I return from my holiday, many people ask me about retired Irish missionaries from The Gambia.

The number is rising steadily: Bishop Emeritus Cleary, Fr Gillooly, Fr Fagan, Fr Fleming, Fr Grimes, Fr Gough, Fr Casey, Fr Hagan.

There are only three of us left here! Eventually, we too shall join 'Dad's Army' - and this will mark the closure in the life of the Catholic Church in The Gambia which began in 1948 when the French Spiritans opened the mission in The Gambia.

This leaves us with a question: Do we have a steady missionary presence in our Catholic Church today?

We do have a strong group of 23 diocesan priests. But a local Church without a missionary wing would leave us deprived of a very important ingredient. It would be similar to our Church having no development wing to complement our evangelisation apostolate. Without being able to send out some Gambian missionaries, the life of our local Church would become turned in on itself - or focused only on its own needs.

Sharing the mission of the universal Church

That's why we celebrate Mission Sunday every year. It keeps us aware of sharing in the mission of the Universal Church in other countries and dioceses - in spite of our own needs.

Brothers and sisters, this has already begun to some extent in our own Church, in various ways over the past twenty years or so.



1997 was the year of four ordinations: three to the diocese, and the fourth the first of a new group of Gambian Spiritans. Fr Gabriel Mendy led the way. Then came Fr Louis T. Mendy in 2001, and Fr Peter Jammeh and Fr Michael Gomez in 2006. Just four Gambians over a period of twenty years. At the moment, we have just one seminarian preparing to become a Spiritan missionary: John Correa (from the parish of Bakoteh).

In the meantime, a steady flow of Ghanaian Spiritans were appointed to help the ministry of the diocese to replace former Irish missionaries (Fr Carrol retired, and Fr White died here). At the same time, the Ghanaian Spiritans were also helping to keep alive the Spiritan missionary charism in The Gambia.

Years of transition

These years were years of transition. (When I came to The Gambia in 1970, there were about 22 Irish Spiritans; today, we have 22 Gambian diocesan priests!) It seemed to me that God was gently calculating our basic needs during these years of transition. Last but not least, and over the last few years, the lay faithful have gradually set up a group of Spiritan Associates, to support and encourage our Gambian Spiritan priests especially.

This has given new life especially to the four Gambian

Spiritans - a 'fragile' group relative to their number - because one has been on mission ever since his ordination, and the other three have also been on mission at different times.

Given this situation, these four 'founders' will need to consolidate their special calling. Hopefully, they will have the support of their diocesan counterparts; of the Spiritans from Ghana; and the Spiritan Associates. We should remember that all of us have a responsibility to ensure that the missionary charism of the Universal Church will be continued in our own local Church - the Diocese of Banjul. It came to us *gratis*: let us share it out generously.

How many hearts comforted...

When Pope Francis canonised Mother Teresa of Kolkata he also emphasised the countless numbers of volunteers who for decades have shared in her mission to the poorest. Her unique witness to the mercy of God has touched so many lives. The Pope described this as follows: 'How many hearts have been comforted by these volunteers; how many hands have they held; and how much love has been poured out in hidden, humble and selfless service among the poorest of the poor.' We are blessed, in this diocese, to have the presence of a community of Missionaries of Charity among us. Praise the Lord!



The true motive force

We have recently celebrated the feast of St Therese of Lisieux. In the autobiography she wrote: 'I was still tormented by the question of unfilled martyrdom...' Eventually, she came to understand that 'love is the true motive force which enabled other members of the Church to act. If there was no love, the apostles would forget to preach the gospel, the martyrs would refuse to shed their blood. To be nothing else than love, deep down in the heart of the Church... that's to be everything at once.'

At that moment in her life, Therese discovered her true mission in the Church. She died at the age of 24. She was eventually named patron of the Universal Mission of the Church.

Therese was called to be a Carmelite Sister. But she discovered a second calling within her first: by praying for the Mission of the Universal Church. She didn't have to do this in another country, or even in another convent.

We pray for all missionaries; for the Christian communities that send them; and for all those who receive and welcome them. Amen.

Canonisation of St Teresa: page 22

OBITUARY

Devoted reverend sister and educationalist

SISTER Calixte Thomas, who served in The Gambia from 1998 to 2012, died at Bangalore, in her native India, on Sunday 18th September, at the age of 69.

Sr Catherine Jarra has recently written of Sr Calixte that she showed love and compassion to many of God's people. 'She carried out her duties with great competency, simplicity, humility and dedication, despite her ill-health. She loved and helped the poor.'

Calixte was born in 1947, the youngest in a family of two boys and four girls. A few months after her first birthday she lost a brother in an accident; and then her mother died, following surgery.

After tuition at home, Calixte (then known as Gracy) attended a boarding school near her father's textile shop. She joined the novitiate of the Cluny Sisters, and made her profession on 17th March 1976.

She took degrees in science and education, and served in her home country until 28th September 1998, when she arrived in The Gambia.

Sr Calixte first taught in St Therese's Junior Secondary School, taking a keen interest in her pupils, and securing scholarships for the needy.

She then worked at GPI as Christian Religious Education (CRE) Co-ordinator. She was instrumental in setting up the present Religious Education programme at Gambia College, working with representatives of other churches to produce the syllabus. She organised many events and workshops.

In GPI she lived in community with Sr Philomena Barry, while Sr Philomena was Director.

Sr Calixte was Manageress of Cluny Nursery Schools, undertook parish pastoral care, and was an active member of



diocesan and parish committees.

She was gifted as a seamstress, embroiderer and cook.

Following her return to India on 30th December 2012, Sr Calixte was increasingly unwell, and eventually died of complications arising from long-term diabetes.

Her funeral was held on Monday 19th September.

Teacher and Secretary

THE DEATH occurred on 12th August of Victoria Michelle Riley - 'Aunty Neneh' - former devoted teacher, and secretary at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Gambia College and the School of Nursing.

Victoria Michelle Neneh Ndow-Riley was born in January 1935 in Banjul to John Benedict Ndow and Anna Marceline Ndow. She attended St Joseph's kindergarten, primary and secondary schools, taking her Senior Cambridge in 1955, before teaching for a year at her old school. The following year, after a short course at the Government Clerical School, she worked at the law chambers of Pierre Sarr-Njie. In the late 50s she taught at the Mohammedan School and St Augustine's, then travelled to Britain to study.

Mrs Riley returned to work at the Royal Victoria Hospital, then at Gambia College and the Gambia School of Nursing. She returned to teaching at St Joseph's Ex-Pupils' School.

In 1970 she married William John Riley.

As a young Catholic, Victoria was a member of the St Cecilia Choir at the Cathedral, and in her retirement an active parishioner at St Anthony's Kololi.

Warm and sociable, Mrs Riley was among the founders of Leon's Vous, a member of Yassa and Adonis Vous and the Tamatis Circle.

Her husband died in 1984. She retired in 1992, and is survived by three children, her stepson, and other members of her family.

Mrs Riley's funeral was at St Anthony's Kololi on Friday 19th August, prior to interment at Old Jeshwang Cemetery.



'We shall remember them'

THE ANNUAL Remembrance Sunday service is to be held at July 22nd Square on Sunday 13th November.

Later that day, at 10.45 am, Christian and Muslim elders will lead prayers at the War Graves Cemetery in Fajara, observing the traditional two-minutes silence at 11am.

During the Second World War (1939-45) two brigades of the Royal West African Frontier Force took part in the successful campaign in Italian East Africa, and two divisions made contributions to victory in Burma. Those serving in the Force were volunteers, many coming from The Gambia.

Many of those who fell in battle are buried or commemorated in the campaign areas. Others are buried or commemorated in their home countries.

Reburial in 1949

During the war, many Gambian and British service personnel were buried randomly all over The Gambia, often

10 bodies to a grave. In 1949, Major Thompson, Officer Commanding the British Army in The Gambia, decided to bury them in one place, and Fajara War Cemetery was laid out that same year.

The exhumed bodies were buried at Fajara with Christians on one side and Muslims on the other. The cemetery contains 203 burials: 122 West African, 63 British, 10 Canadian, two Australian, two New Zealander, one Rhodesian, two French and one Norwegian.

In Banjul, the Supreme Court and Arch 22 occupy the site of the former European Cemetery, where some servicemen had been laid to rest. The Gambian Government decided to re-inter the remains at Fajara War Cemetery and Jeshwang Christian Cemetery. Through the Gambia Christian Council, the Revd Prince Decker of the Anglican Church and the Revd Titus Pratt of the Methodist Church offered prayers before the remains were removed and re-interred



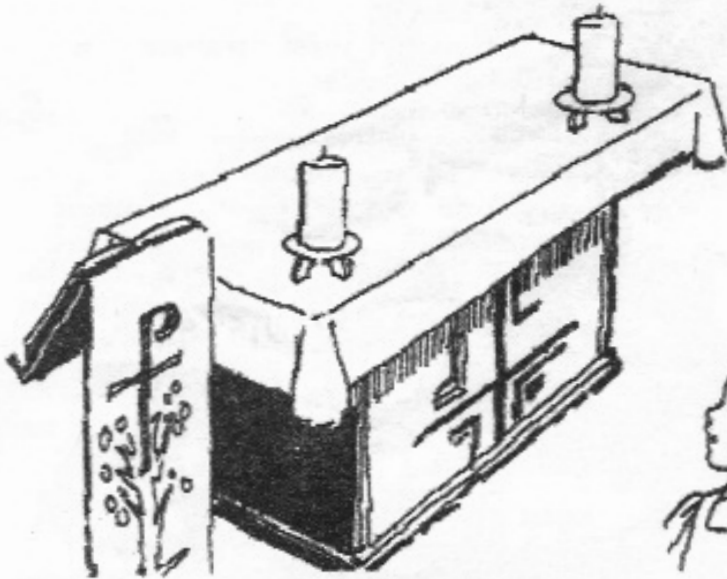
CHILDREN'S PAGE

Here are some things we see in church.
Can you say which is which?

Altar
Altar boy
Candles

Chalice and paten
Crucifix
Lectern
Priest

Service Book (Missal)
Stations of the Cross
Statue



How to pray the rosary - and nourish your faith

FOR centuries, countless Catholics have found that saying the rosary regularly greatly nourishes their faith.

October, in particular, is the Month of the Rosary. But we say the rosary throughout the year.

The term 'rosary' comes from Latin. It refers to a garland of roses, the rose being one of the flowers that symbolise the Virgin Mary.

The rosary is a biblical form of devotion, because the prayers that comprise it come mainly from the Bible.

HOW TO SAY THE ROSARY

The rosary consists of a set number of specific prayers. We use rosary beads to help us say the prayers in order.

First come the introductory prayers: the Apostles' Creed, the Our Father, three Hail Marys and the Glory be.

Between the introductory prayers and the two concluding prayers is the substance of the rosary: the decades.

The decades

Each decade has thirteen prayers: ten Hail Marys followed by Our Father, Glory be and the short prayer, 'O my Jesus'.

Each decade is devoted to a mystery (a truth of the faith) in the life of Christ or his mother.

The twenty decades of the rosary are divided into four groups of five:

- the joyful mysteries
 - the sorrowful mysteries
 - the glorious mysteries
 - the luminous mysteries.

When people speak of 'saying the rosary' they usually mean saying one set of five mysteries each day (joyful, luminous, sorrowful or glorious). This takes about fifteen minutes.

To say all twenty mysteries would take about an hour.



If you say the rosary every day, you may divide each set of five mysteries as follows:

Monday and Saturday: the joyful mysteries

- The annunciation of Gabriel to Mary (Luke 1: 26-38)
- The visitation of Mary to Elizabeth (Luke 1: 39-56)
- The birth of Jesus (Luke 2: 1-21)
- The presentation of Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2: 22-38)
- The finding of Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2: 41-52)

Thursday: the luminous mysteries

- The baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3: 13-16)
- The wedding at Cana (John 2: 1-11)
- The proclamation of the Kingdom (Mark 1: 14-15)
- The Transfiguration (Matthew 17: 1-8)
- The Last Supper (Matthew 26: 26: 36-56)

Friday: the sorrowful mysteries

- The agony in the garden
- The scourging at the pillar (Matthew 27: 31)
- The crowning with thorns (Matthew 27: 31)
- The carrying of the cross (Matthew 27: 32)
- The crucifixion (Matthew 27: 33-56)

Wednesday and Sunday: the glorious mysteries

- The resurrection (John 20: 1-29)
- The ascension (Luke 24: 36-53)
- The descent of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2: 1-41)
- The assumption of Mary
- The coronation of Mary as Queen of Heaven

During Advent, Lent and Eastertide a different daily pattern of the mysteries may be adopted.

THE PRAYERS OF THE ROSARY

The Apostles' Creed

The Apostles' Creed was not composed by the apostles themselves, but it expresses their teaching. The original form of the creed came into use about AD 125.

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 rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God, the Father almighty. From there he will 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.

Our Father (*Pater noster*; the Lord's Prayer)

The next prayer of the rosary, the Our Father (*Pater noster*) is given in the New Testament in two slightly different versions (Matthew 6: 9-13 and Luke 11: 2-4).

The version in Matthew is the one we use.

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.

The Hail Mary (*Ave Maria*)

HAIL Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art 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.

The Hail Mary is the prayer at the heart of the rosary.

It begins, 'Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.' This is the greeting that the angel Gabriel gives Mary in Luke 1:28.

It continues, 'Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.' This is what Mary's cousin Elizabeth says to her in Luke 1:42.

The only thing that has been added to these two verses are the names 'Jesus' and 'Mary', to make clear who is being referred to. So the first part of the Hail Mary is entirely biblical.

The second part of the Hail Mary is not taken straight from Scripture, but is biblical in the thoughts it expresses. It reads, 'Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.'

Mary was the first to accept Jesus (Luke 1: 45). The title 'Mother of God' means that her Son Jesus is the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, truly God and truly man.

Some non-Catholic Christians may feel uneasy about the petition, 'Pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.' They consider that such a prayer contradicts St Paul's teaching in 1 Timothy 2:5: 'For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.'

But in the preceding four verses (1 Timothy 2:1-4) Paul instructs Christians to pray for each other, meaning that it

doesn't interfere with Christ's mediation. 'I urge that prayers, supplications, petitions and thanksgivings be made for everyone ... This is good and pleasing to God our Saviour.'

We know that this exhortation to others applies to the saints in heaven. As Revelation 5:8 reveals, the saints intercede for us by offering our prayers to God: 'The twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and with golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.'

Glory be (*Gloria Patri*)

The fourth prayer in the rosary is the Glory be. This short hymn of thanksgiving has been used since the fourth century (though its present form is from the seventh century). It is recited at the end of each psalm in the Divine Office.

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

O my Jesus

After the Glory be, throughout the five decades, comes the short prayer, O my Jesus.

O MY Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell; lead all souls to heaven, especially those most in need of thy mercy. Amen

Hail, holy Queen (*Salve Regina*)

At the end of the five decades we usually recite the Hail, holy Queen. It's the most commonly-recited prayer in praise of Mary after the Hail Mary itself. It was composed at the end of the eleventh century.

HAIL holy Queen, mother of mercy; our life, our sweetness and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears. Turn then, most gracious advocate, thy eyes of mercy towards us. And after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy 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

To conclude the rosary, we add a 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 thee, that by meditating on 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.

Our faith tells us that Christ is as really present today as he was to his mother and his disciples.

With the rosary we sit at the school of Mary and are led to contemplate the beauty of Christ and to experience the depth of his love.

Friday 7th October: Our Lady of the Rosary

We pray especially on this day for the people of the Church of the Holy Rosary, Lamin, opened in April 1995.



family circle

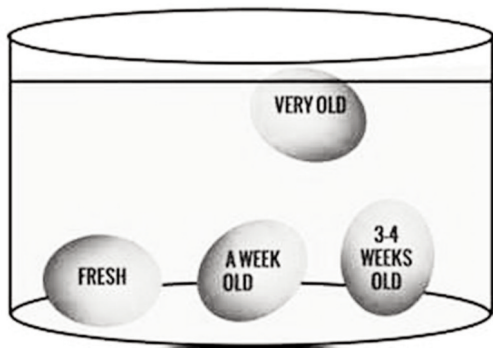
Know your eggs...

OLDER people may tell you that in their young days far fewer Gambians ate eggs. Today, eggs are increasingly popular. They are always in season, and are one of the most versatile and valuable foods.

Eggs can be prepared as a snack. They're used in all kinds of dishes.

Some people prefer brown eggs to white ones. But all eggs taste the same. Just make sure that you only buy eggs that are not cracked.

Don't buy too many eggs at a time. The fresher the egg, the better.



Testing for freshness

To test the freshness of an egg, immerse it in cold water. A new-laid egg will lie flat. An older egg is more buoyant, and will tilt or even stand upright in the water.

If an egg floats to the surface, it is too old, and should really be thrown away.

Eggs are best kept at a constant cool temperature. If you have a refrigerator, store your eggs in the least cold part.

Always let eggs come to room temperature before using them.

Separated egg whites, if tightly covered, may be kept in the fridge for up to a week.

Egg yolks can be kept in the fridge for a day or two only - after which they start to dry out.

Just on the boil

Here's a little know-how about the simplest of all cooking: boiling an egg.

Boiled eggs should actually be simmered - not boiled. Boiling toughens the whites, and rattling around in a pan might crack the shells. If you salt the water it stops the white leaking out if the shell should crack.

The best way to boil eggs is to put them into a pan of shimmering water, bring the water to the boil, then immediately lower the heat so that it returns to the shimmer and cook for the required time. Start timing from the

moment the eggs go into the water.

* A **soft-boiled** egg (white set firm enough to hold the yolk, and soft yolk) will take 3 to 4 minutes.

* An **oeuf mollet** (as the French call it) is boiled for longer. The white is firm and the yolk almost set, but runny in the middle. This will take 5 to 8 minutes.

* A **hard-boiled** egg (white and yolk set) will take around 10 minutes. Cook it any longer and your hard-boiled egg will be rubbery; and the yoke will be crumbly, with a khaki ring round it.

Once cooked, plunge hard-boiled eggs into cold water. This stops them from cooking further.

To shell an **oeuf mollet** or hard-boiled egg it is best to crack it all over with a spoon and peel off the inner skin with the shell.

Once shelled, keep eggs in a bowl of water to prevent them drying out.

Why not acquire the skill of making your own mayonnaise at home? It will be much tastier than what you can buy in the shops. All you need is egg yolk, olive oil, an egg-whisk, a little salt and a squeeze of lemon.

Just for fun?

FROM mid-October, shops in the smarter parts of town sell masks and fancy clothing depicting witches, goblins, black cats and ghosts.

It's all to do with Hallowe'en - increasingly celebrated among middle-class Gambian families as a children's dressing-up and party day.

The witches and spooks stem from pagan days in England and Ireland, when 31st October was Celtic new year's eve.

Such pagan observances influenced the Christian eve of All Saints. In England, All Saints used to be known as 'All Hallows' or 'Hallowmas'. So 'Hallowe'en' is the evening before All Saints Day.

Hallowe'en gradually lost its religious aspect. In the late 19th-century, Hallowe'en was introduced into the United States, where it became commercialised, as it is nowadays in The Gambia.



Hallowe'en is associated in a frivolous way with evil spirits and the supernatural. It's celebrated by children in fancy dress who play pranks on each other and on adults.

We may regard most of this play-acting as harmless. But a much more important day, one which the Church asks us to observe in faith and with joy, is the following day, Tuesday 1st November. See page 26

SET-SETTAL

Don't drop litter!

Help keep your
neighbourhood
and the nation clean





- Stress -

- A housewife worried about the cost of living
- A schoolboy trembling at the thought of exams
- An office employee struggling to cope with his work
- An old lady crippled with arthritis
- A priest, overworked and lonely
- A neighbour, frightened of going to the dentist

ALL these, and many others, are suffering from stress.

Anything that makes us angry, frustrated or unhappy can cause stress. It is very common indeed.

But some factors which cause stress give others excitement. Sportsmen, and many business people, for example. In fact, a certain amount of stress is actually good for us. When we have to face up to a challenge or are made to get on with some job that we don't want to do, and find that we can meet the challenge, we feel a lot better.

Facing challenges and overcoming them stops us from becoming bored. Some people deliberately create stress in their lives to overcome periods of dull routine.

Too much stress, however, affects our health and well-being, and may interfere with our job and family life.

Continuous and severe stress weakens and demoralises us.

Coping with the unexpected

As we grow older and mature, we become better at what to expect in everyday life, and what to do about the things that upset us. We become better at coping with the unexpected. We may hardly be aware that we are 'coping with stress'.

But some big events - a marriage, a death, losing one's job, trouble with a teenage child, for example - may be more than we can cope with.

In order to live successfully with stress, we need to spend some time considering what causes it.

Are our responses to stress sensible and useful?

Or are they preventing us from coping, and regaining control?

What causes stress?

Stress can become severe when events are

- unpredictable or unfamiliar
- major or intense
- unavoidable or inevitable

Sometimes, though, stress comes 'out of the blue'.

Ask yourself if there is anything you can do about it.

- Do you have continual disagreements about something or someone?

- Are you undertaking a new, unaccustomed role?
- Are you carrying too much responsibility?
- Do situations leave you feel that you are not good enough, or that it is all your fault?
- Do you have unspoken fears or frustrations about your life?

Signs of stress vary from person to person: headaches in one person, diarrhoea in another.

Tension, irritability and moodiness are frequent symptoms. Other people may notice that we are under stress before we do.

Is there anything you can do?

The best way we can deal with physical reactions to stress is in deep breathing.

Practise relaxation.

Sit or lie down in a comfortable place where you won't be interrupted. Close your eyes. Breathe deeply.

Hold your breath for three to six seconds, then breathe out slowly, allowing your rib-cage and stomach to relax completely.

Take a break, if you can, from your usual routine.

If you are too often indoors, get into the fresh air - alone, or with family or friends.

All this is useful. But what is really needed is being honest with yourself, and finding someone to talk quietly to about yourself.

This could be your wife or husband, a close friend, your doctor (if he has the time!) or your priest.

Don't suffer alone



Your religious faith should help you. If you have faith in God, you know you are never alone. Pray, quietly and with confidence.

Remember, though, that many Christians and people of other faiths do suffer from stress; it is not unknown among priests. Your faith will

help you only in so far that you trust in God, and ask him for help.

Although we cannot, and indeed should not, avoid stress, we can learn to meet it efficiently and live with it successfully, rather than letting stress overwhelm us to the extent that it affects our mental and physical health.

Taking stock

There are enormous individual differences in the causes of stress, and our ability to cope.

We should think about and identify the undesirable stresses in our life, and learn how to control them - either alone or with the help of others, and with prayer.

Taking stock of ourselves from time to time can be a greatly exercise. It's amazing how little we question our priorities, and how many sources of unnecessary stress we can get rid of by doing this.

If you are fortunate, and rarely, if ever, suffer stress, you must know others who do suffer. Is there any way you can help them?

Building for the Lord and his people

We conclude our abridgement of 'The Life of an Irish Missionary Priest' by Fr JOHN SHARPE CSSp, now living in retirement at Kunkujang Mariama



**St Francis' Church, first church in Kunkujang
- and still in use**

AS the numbers of believers in Kunkujang Mariama increased, it was inevitable that a church would have to be built. The school served as a church until 24th June 1979, when St Francis' Church was blessed by Bishop Michael Moloney.

Funding for the church was provided through Igemer Glemme, a minister of the Lutheran Church in Sweden.

There was no plan for the church. An Irish volunteer, Jim Murphy, was a great help with the building. The round chapel was added to be the focus of faith in the Blessed Sacrament. I was advised to have a low entrance so that the faithful would enter the sacred place in a bowed posture.

The paintings in both church and chapel were executed by Pierre Davis.

The base of the altar was made from the stump of a large tree, dug up by Sapala Piel Sambou of Brufut. It took four days to bring to the church, where it was placed in a deep hole. The sanctuary was then built around the tree.

With the growth of the nursery, basic-cycle and high schools, Sunday Mass was said in the Marian Hall. This hall was designed by Cyril Ashby, an Irishman, who supervised the project at weekends during his time off work.

Paul Mendy eventually took over supervision of the project and roofed the hall.

No workman, apart from Kunkujang locals, took any part in the building. It was funded in part by *Miserior*, who donated \$25,000. The rest I raised myself.

A chance remark...

A chance remark I made to Cyril Ashby while building the Marian Hall resulted in the Church of Our Lady Queen of Peace. I asked him to design a church to hold about 800 people.

Some years later, when I visited Mr Ashby in Cork, Ireland,

he handed me a bundle of plans for the church. With my small knowledge of architecture, I glanced through the drawings and told him they looked fine. I gave the plans to Bishop Michael Cleary to study.

I realised how big the church was going to be.

Soon it became clear to me that it would serve as a wonderful National Shrine Church of Our Lady Queen of Peace.

The builder had forgotten to include a tower, so half of the big tree in front of the church had to be cut down to make room for one. The church spire is a copy of that of the basilica in Knock, Ireland.

The tiling and window glass designs were the work of Judy Radureski, daughter of the over-all supervisor, Ed Radureski. Without Mr Radureski's help, the church would never have been completed.

The altar base was bought from a woodcutter for a bag of rice, and transported by tractor to the church.

Timber doors and altar furnishings were designed and fitted by Dan McCauley, master craftsman.

The tabernacle, cross and statue of Our Lady were imported from Italy at a cost of £15,000.

The welding and assembly of seating was done at the church by Jacob Manneh.

One July morning...

Ed Radureski introduced me to a Canadian artist who came to The Gambia at my expense and agreed to paint murals. But in June 2004 he informed me that he would not return to do the work. It looked as if my dream of a truly beautiful church would never be fulfilled.

I put my trust in Our Lady Queen of Peace.

In August 2005, while on holiday in Ireland, I looked for mural painters at Trinity College Dublin and a few other places, with no luck.



The Shrine Church of Our Lady Queen of Peace

Finally, I went out to Dingle, because I have family there.

I remember well that early that July morning I had prayed to the Lady of Fatima, asking her for help in finding a mural painter.

Within the hour, I happened to walk up the steps of the Lady of Fatima Shrine, near the parish church.

A young woman was painting murals in the grotto.

Her work looked good, so I asked her if she would like to come to The Gambia and do some work in a new church for me.

‘Where is The Gambia?’ she asked.

She was Eleanor Yates, aged 27, from Colorado, USA, who was painting on the wall of the grotto the words, ‘Here I am, Lord; send me.’

Eleanor told me to come back in two days. In the meantime, she checked The Gambia on the web.

When I met her again, she was enthusiastic about the project.

I explained what I wanted, gave her pictures of the church and its walls, and arranged a contract.

Eleanor begins

Eleanor Yates arrived in Kunkujang in December 2005 and began her work.

I had never gone away when a guest was in Kunkujang, and I had never returned to Ireland for Christmas. But that year the wedding of one of my nieces made it essential for me to leave. When I arrived back on 3rd January 2006 and saw what Eleanor had painted, I was dismayed. On the main altar wall, she had painted eight Afro-American children, looking down at the church.

I tried once more to explain what I needed: that the children should be praying to Our Lady, and that they should be more Gambian-looking.

Eleanor seemed to take the change well. But as fate would have it, she came down with malaria the very next morning.

A week later, as she was on the mend, Eleanor asked me to allow her to go to her sister, who lived in Florence, Italy. I allowed her to go at my expense, and she promised to return with new designs that would include local children.

Eleanor recovered in Italy and found inspiration in photographs she’d taken of local children before she left.

She also found the perfect face for the Blessed Virgin Mary on the famous bridge, the Ponte Vecchio.

While Eleanor was there with her sister and niece, a young woman passed by. ‘She’s the one I need for Holy Mary!’ Eleanor told her sister. But a crowd of tourists made it impossible to catch up with the young woman, who was in a hurry.

Five hours later, as Eleanor and her sister and niece turned a corner on the other side of Florence, they ran directly into the young woman.

Eleanor was quick to ask her if she would model for a few pictures. She agreed, and was photographed on the spot. Her name was Benedetta. Eleanor’s sister put her daughter in Benedetta’s arms to serve as the baby Jesus, and Eleanor draped a spare baby-blanket on Benedetta’s head. She had

never held a baby before.

As she walked off, she shouted back, ‘I didn’t tell you! I come from a village close to Bethlehem!’

Having got to know the children at Kunkujang well, Eleanor reproduced their faces on the wall behind the altar, along with Mary and Baby Jesus.

Eleanor returned to the USA in April 2006 for another job, and came back to finish the murals in September the same year.

First, she painted Pope John Paul II in the Lady Chapel. Then she turned her attention to the other chapel.

As in her previous visit, Eleanor locked everyone, including me, out of the church. When I was let back in again, I found the most beautiful painting of the Annunciation.

On 15th December 2006 Eleanor left after painting the Resurrection scene in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel. She also made two DVDs about the children.

On 1st February, 21 members of my family arrived from Ireland for the dedication of the church.

It was a beautiful celebration.

Unforgettable Margareta

Any account of Kunkujang must include mention of Margareta Edenius. Kunkujang as a village and centre of education would never have developed without her assistance.

My first contact with Margareta was around 1973. She was among a group of Swedish tourists whom I’d invited to visit the area on a sight-seeing tour.

A week later, she came on her own to Kanifing.

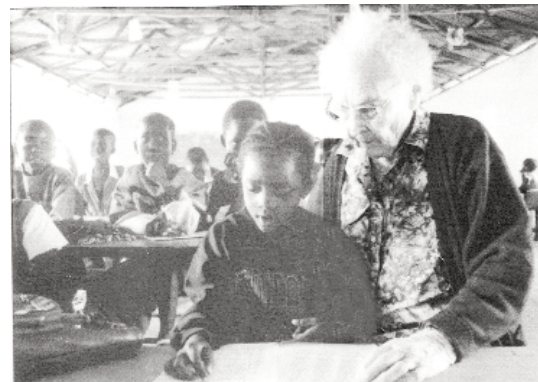
I was in bed with malaria when she offered me £30 - money left over after her holiday. ‘What will you do with it?’ she asked.

I got out of bed and brought her out to my little school under the tree in my compound. She was delighted. £30 would pay teachers for two months. She went back to Sweden, got a group of women together and collected £150 to build a mud school.

Then, with the help of friends and a Swedish government agency, money was raised to expand the school. Margareta found money to help build a new village and to buy seeds for improved farming.

Her work did not stop in Kunkujang. Nine bush schools were financed through her help, as well as the boarding quarters in the mission. And with her help, we bought a 7.5-kilovolt generator, which for many years supplied light to most of the village.

During these years, Margareta came to The Gambia with her husband Anders twice a year. She visited all the projects



in Kunkujang and in many other parts of The Gambia, especially in the Bwiam area.

In 1993 the NGO *Radda Barrens* Sweden discontinued their aid. This added new fire to Margareta's efforts. She formed new groups and gave talks in schools in Sweden.

As a reward for her outstanding work for the Church in The Gambia, Margareta was awarded the *Pro Ecclesia et Pontificate* honour by Pope John Paul II, she having joined the Catholic Church some time before.

Nothing was allowed to prevent her visiting The Gambia. One year she suffered a stroke on a Sunday and arrived in The Gambia the following Saturday.

Last visit

Margareta's last visit to Gambia was in December 2005, when she was 92.

Following this trip, she was found to have cancer of the

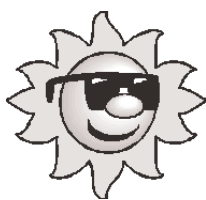
throat.

After some time on a drip and feeding tube, Margareta decided that it was better for her to die with dignity. So she called her family together and told them it was not necessary to prolong her life beyond its natural span. She asked them to tell me of this heroic decision.

On 2nd April 2006, drips and feeding tubes were removed. She slipped into a coma, and died peacefully on 6th April 2006.

Early in May I went to Sweden for Margareta's funeral. With other priests, I said the Requiem Mass After lunch, a Protestant service was held. The body was cremated according to her wishes. Her ashes were scattered, I think, in the same plot as those of her husband, Anders.

Margareta's work goes on. In her last years she gathered many loyal and faithful friends and passed the work onto them.



Fee moi Gambia

Tempus fugit – and how!

THE FIRST Sunday in October was the 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time - meaning that there were only eight Sundays left before the end of the Christian year.

We often want to know the exact time of day, and of course the week, month and year. We expect others to know, too, and to be on time. Business and the public services are hugely dependent on good time-keeping.

Yet sometimes we may envy our forebears. Unlike us, they weren't 'slaves of time'. They took account of the movement of the sun and the seasons, but they didn't need to know the exact time every day. If 'ignorance is bliss', they were likewise happily ignorant of 'world news', or even what was going on in the next village.

Today, news from around the world (mostly bad news) flashes round the world in seconds.

'New technology' is transforming our lives. All the same, the passage of time is inexorable, as births and deaths remind us. 'The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away.' The Church calendar celebrates times and seasons, reminding us that we are, as 'pilgrim people', always moving on.

We're often reminded to live each day as though it were our last. Indeed, each one of us, young or old, may meet a sudden end. That's why Catholics ask Mary, 'Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death.'

If you know Latin, remember *carpe diem!* We shouldn't, you and I, put off until tomorrow (which 'never comes') what we could do today.

Our beloved sisters

I'M sorry to say that if I'm asked how many Orders of Sisters are serving in The Gambia I cannot say.

And when I ask others, I often get the same answer.

There are, in fact, seven: St Joseph of Annecy, St Joseph of Cluny, the Presentation of Mary, the Marists, the School

Sisters of Notre Dame, the Sisters of Charity and the Daughters of Mary.

These excellent ladies pray for us. They serve and support us - especially the poor and needy.

Our sisters exemplify the Christian vocation. They merit our thanks and fervent prayers.

Godless goodbye

I'M looking at the programme of a recent funeral in London. It was what's called a 'humanist' ceremony: 'a meaningful non-religious ceremony just for you'.

Before cremation, there were tributes to the deceased. There was time, too, for mourners to 'remember him in your own way' - which meant that some, at least, did silently pray for him.

This kind of farewell is increasingly common in 'secular' England.

Humanists say they 'seek to make the most of the one life we have, and aim to lead positive and responsible lives based on the goals of human welfare, happiness and fulfilment. Humanists make sense of the world using reason, experience and compassion.'

Who would want to argue with that? Christians and other religious people seek the same, except that they acknowledge the One God, and our dependence on him.

But I do have a quibble. Why do 'humanists' coyly avoid calling themselves atheists?

And why have those who advocate the putting to death of the incurable renamed the Euthanasia Society 'Dignitas'?

Whether or not we believe in God, it's surely best to call a spade a spade. That's why the Creed is so simple and direct.

Damp? No energy?

How are you coping with the weather this October?

The rains are over, but there's plenty of moisture in the air. October is the most humid and the most enervating month.

Fortunate are those who have fans and air conditioners. For the rest of us, perhaps the best advice is to slow down: physically, if not mentally.

If you're not feeling like moving about, why not say the rosary? That's a good way to keep mould away!

And there's more comfortable weather soon to come!

Suscipe, quæsimus, Domine, sacrificia tuis instituta præceptis

Accept, O Lord, we pray, the sacrifices instituted by your commands

Sunday Reflections

Reflections, readings and prayers for the Sundays in October & November
and for All Saints and All Souls



The colour for all the Sundays in Ordinary Time is green.

2nd October

27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Talking to God



A THEME common to the first reading and the Gospel of the next seven Sundays is the value of coming to know Almighty God better through our prayers.

The first reading today, from Habbakkuk, reminds us that God always answers prayer, though not always at the time and in the way that we expect.

The Gospel reading recalls how Jesus' disciples asked him, most commendably, to increase their faith.

Jesus told them, in effect, that faith can move mountains. He went on to point out that whatever they did for God was no more than their duty.

Perhaps our foremost prayer, having adored and thanked God for all his blessings, should be, 'Lord, increase my faith.'

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: Habakkuk 1:2-3;2:2-4. Psalm 94:1-2,6-9.
Response: O that today you would listen to his voice! Harden not your hearts. 2 Timothy 1:6-8,13-14

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

Gospel: Luke 17:5-10

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...

9th October

28th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Salvation for all

NAMAAN, commander of the army of the King of Aram, of whom today's first reading speaks, was a 'great man' and a 'mighty warrior'. But Namaan was not a worshipper of the God of the Israelites, and he scoffed when the prophet Elisha told him that if he washed in the River Jordan seven times he would be cured of his leprosy. All the same, Namaan did so, and was astonished and delighted when the cure did indeed take place.

In thanksgiving, Namaan declared that henceforth he would worship none but the God of Israel.

Centuries later, as related in today's Gospel reading, when Jesus cured ten lepers, only one - a Samaritan, a non-Jew - turned back to praise God, and thank Jesus.

We should always thank God for his mercies, and note that his love embraces all mankind. As today's responsorial psalm (number 97) declares: 'The Lord has shown his salvation to the nations.'



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: 2 Kings 5:14-17. Psalm 92:1-4. Response: The Lord has shown his salvation to the nations. 2 Timothy 2:8-13

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

Gospel: Luke 17:11-19

Prayer over the Offerings

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

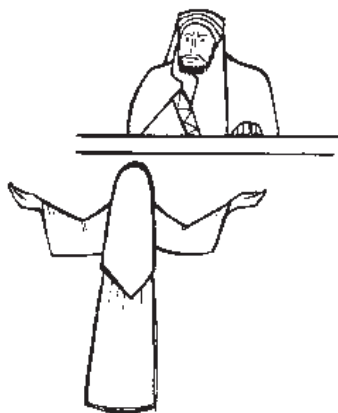
16th October
29th Sunday in Ordinary Time
(Mission Sunday)

Never lose heart

MOSES tried to keep his arms raised in prayer for the rescue of his people from their enemies. When he became too tired, his arms were held up for him, and thus his prayer prevailed. The lesson of today's first reading is that we should be persistent in prayer.

The Gospel reading recalls how Jesus underscored the value of constant prayer by speaking of a judge who was by no means a good man, but who gave way to a widow's entreaties because she never gave up. How much more, assured Jesus, will God answer our own persistent prayer.

Let us heed our Lord's advice: 'Pray continually, and never lose heart.'



Collect

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

Readings: Exodus 17:8-13. Psalm 120. Response: Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth. 2 Timothy 3:14-4:2

Gospel acclamation: Alleluia... May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ enlighten the eyes of our mind, so that we see what hope his call holds for us...

Gospel: Luke 18:1-8

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...

23rd October

30th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Access to the Most High

'GOD is no respecter of persons,' we're told in today's reading from Ecclesiasticus. That means that the prayer of a bishop counts for no more than that of the humblest layman or laywoman. The power of a king or president does not constitute a 'hot-line' to God; we are all equal when it comes to access to



the Most High. Yet some people are snooty about their place in society or the Church; they claim too much for themselves.

Jesus' parable about two men in the Temple - one an arrogant Pharisee and the other a socially-despised tax-collector - is one of most simple and most dramatic.

We shan't get to heaven by boasting about our own virtues, but by confessing our need of God's mercy.

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: Ecclesiasticus 35:12-14,16-19. Psalm 32:2-3, 17-19,23. Response: The poor man called; the Lord heard him. 2 Timothy 4:6-8,16-18

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

Gospel: Luke 18:9-14

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...

30th October

31st Sunday in Ordinary Time

Everyone's friend

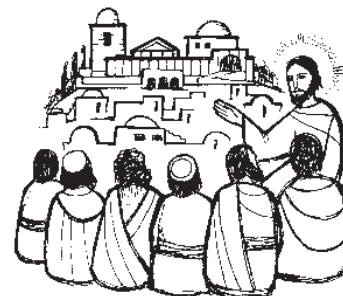
TODAY'S first reading, from the Book of Wisdom, reminds us all of God's greatness and goodness. God is the 'lover of life' who treats everyone who turns to him with mercy.

So, in the Gospel reading, we see how Zacchaeus the tax-collector, a man widely

despised, found acceptance with Jesus, and a warm welcome. 'The Son of Man has come to seek and save what was lost.'

Jesus' acceptance of everyone, regardless of race, religion and social status, offends those who treat religion as a badge of social respectability and 'doing the right thing'. Such an attitude is still common in every society, including our own. But we should not despise anyone who sincerely seeks God. And it is wonderful that Jesus seeks our own company, even as he sought the company of the outcast, Zacchaeus.

See homily by Pope Francis on page 20, and the back page.



Collect

ALMIGHTY and merciful God, by whose gift your faithful offer you right and praiseworthy service, grant, we pray, that we may hasten without stumbling to receive the things you have promised...

Readings: Wisdom 11:22-12:2. Psalm 144:1-2,8-11,13-14.
Response: I will bless your name for ever, O God my King.
2 Thessalonians 1:11-2:2

Gospel acclamation: Alleluia... Blessings on the King who comes in the name of the Lord...

Gospel: Luke 19:1-10

Prayer over the Offerings

MAY these sacrificial offerings, O Lord, become for you a pure oblation, and for us a holy outpouring of your mercy...

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

Prayer after Communion

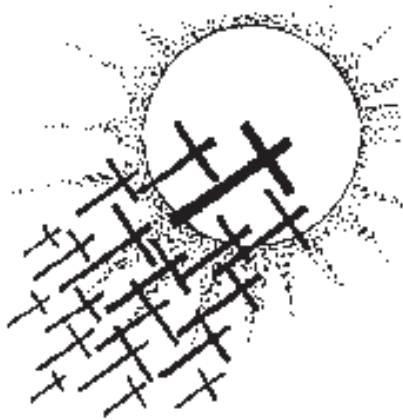
MAY the working of your power, O Lord, increase in us, we pray, that, renewed by these heavenly Sacraments, we may be prepared by your gift for receiving what they promise...

Tuesday 1st November ALL SAINTS

*Holiday of
Obligation*

*For a commentary
on this great day,
see page 26*

*The colour for All
Saints is white or gold*



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...

Wednesday

2nd November

The Commemoration of all the Faithful Departed

(All Souls Day)

The colour for All Souls is white (in some dioceses, purple or black)

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

For a commentary on All Souls, see pages 26 - 27.



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...

6th November

32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Sure and certain hope

VERY suitably, on this Sunday after All Souls' Day, our readings concern Christian hope in the resurrection.

In the creed, Sunday by Sunday, we proclaim, 'I look forward to the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.'

In the first reading, we see how the Maccabees, persecuted for their religion, preferred torture and death to forswearing their faith in God. They died gladly because of their faith in the resurrection: 'Ours is a better choice, to meet death at



a man's hands, yet relying on God's promise that we shall be raised up by him.'

The Gospel relates how Jesus told the Sadducees (who did not believe in the resurrection) that the life of the world to come is real and absolute. So let us trust in the Lord, and conduct our daily lives in the hope of heaven.

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: 2 Maccabees 7:1-2,9-14. Psalm 16:1,5-6,8,15. Response: I shall be filled, when I awake, with the sight of your glory, O Lord. 2 Thessalonians 2:16-3:5

Gospel acclamation: Alleluia... Stay awake at all times, for the strength to stand with confidence before the Son of Man...

Gospel: Luke 20:27-38

Prayer over the Offerings

LOOK with favour, we pray, O Lord, upon the sacrificial gifts offered here, that, celebrating in mystery the Passion of your Son, we may honour it with loving devotion...

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

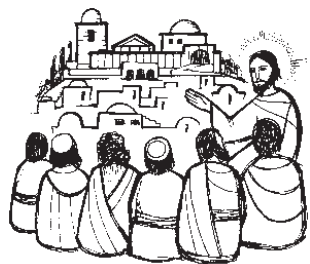
Prayer after Communion

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

13th November

33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Today we remember those who in time of war have lost their lives, particularly during the First and Second World Wars (see page 6)



'All will be thrown down'

ALTHOUGH the Jews worshipped God in their local synagogues, their faith was centred on God's holy house in Jerusalem, the Temple, which contained the Ark of the Covenant.

After the Temple had been twice destroyed, King Herod, in Jesus' day, was rebuilding it, intending it to be more impressive (for Herod's own glory) than ever.

Jesus' disciples were understandably in awe of this new Temple. But Jesus told them that it would not last. (In fact, the Temple was destroyed again, for the third time, in AD70, never to be rebuilt.)

Jesus taught his disciples to strive, not for the things of this world, but for the world to come. In this world they would, like Jesus himself, face persecution, betrayal, and even martyrdom. But their endurance would save their lives – their eternal lives.

Sic transit gloria mundi: this world's glory will pass away. What lessons do we draw for ourselves, as we endeavour to live the Christian life in our own time and place?

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: Malachi 3:19-20. Psalm 97:5-9. Response: The Lord comes to rule the peoples with fairness. 2 Thessalonians 3:7-12

Gospel acclamation: Alleluia... Stay awake at all times, for the strength to stand with confidence before the Son of Man...

Gospel: Luke 21:5-19

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, humbly imploring, O Lord, that what your Son commanded us to do in memory of him may bring us growth in charity...

Sunday 19th

November

Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

'Thy kingdom come'

HOW can we proclaim Jesus Christ as Universal King, when in much of the world Jesus is unknown, or his teaching misunderstood, rejected and neglected?

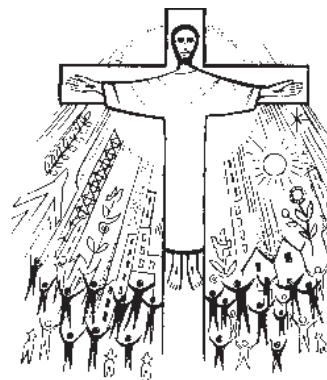
God's kingdom is already absolute, whether we acknowledge it or not. His rule embraces all human life, and stretches beyond time and space. And, because Jesus is Love Incarnate, there's a place in his kingdom for all who respond to him.

Christ's incarnation, his death and resurrection are his pledge of a place in his kingdom. As he said to the penitent thief dying by his side: 'Truly, I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.' This all-powerful love, this truth and this promise are what all the Mass readings this past year have led up to. Jesus' birth, death and resurrection, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, are God's way of loving and saving mankind, admitting us to his eternal kingdom.

Today's second contains is the glorious, proclamation of St Paul: '...For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace by the blood of his cross.' Our Blessed Lord Jesus Christ is indeed the Universal King: the Way, the Truth and the Life.

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: 2 Samuel 5:1-3. Psalm 121:1-5. Response: I rejoiced when I heard them say, Let us go to God's house. Colossians 1:12-20

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

Gospel: Luke 23:35-43

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...

*27th November: 1st Sunday of Advent
- see December 2016/January 2017 Newsletter*



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.

Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament

ONE of the most popular Catholic services is Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. It is usually an afternoon or evening devotion, and consists in the singing of certain hymns or litanies before the Blessed Sacrament, which is exposed on the altar in a monstrance, surrounded with lights.

At the end, the priest, his shoulders enveloped in a humeral veil, takes the monstrance into his hands and with it makes the sign of the Cross (hence the name 'Benediction') in silence over the kneeling congregation.

Benediction is often celebrated as a conclusion to other services, such as Vespers. There is a good deal of diversity, but some elements are constant: the use of incense and candles, the singing of the hymn *Tantum ergo*, and the blessing with the Blessed Sacrament.

The service generally begins with the entry of the priest and his assistants and with the singing of *O Salutaris Hostia* as soon as the Blessed Sacrament is taken out of the tabernacle.



*O salutaris Hostia,
Quæ cæli pandis ostium;
Bella premunt hostilia,
Da robur, fer auxilium.*

*Uni Trinoque Domino
Sit sempiterna gloria,
Qui vitam sino termino
Nobis donet in patria. Amen.*

*Tantum ergo Sacramentum
Venererur cernui,
Et antiquum documentum
Novo cedat ritui;
Præstet fides supplementum
Sensuum defectui.*

*Genitori, Genitoque,
Laus et jubilatio.
Salus, honor, virtus quoque
Sit et benedictio.
Procedenti ab utroque
Compar sit laudatio. Amen*

O saving Victim, opening wide
The gate of heav'n to man below,
Our foes press in from every side,
Thine aid supply, thy strength bestow.

To thy great name be endless praise,
Immortal Godhead, One in Three;
O grant us endless length of days
In our true native land with thee. Amen

Therefore we, before him bending,
This great Sacrament revere.
Types and shadows have their ending,
For the newer rite is here.
Faith, our outward sense befriending,
Makes the inward vision clear.

Glory let us give, and blessing
To the Father and the Son,
Honour, might and praise addressing,
While eternal ages run.
Ever too his love confessing
Who, from both, with both is one. Amen

HYMNS AT BENEDICTION

O salutaris

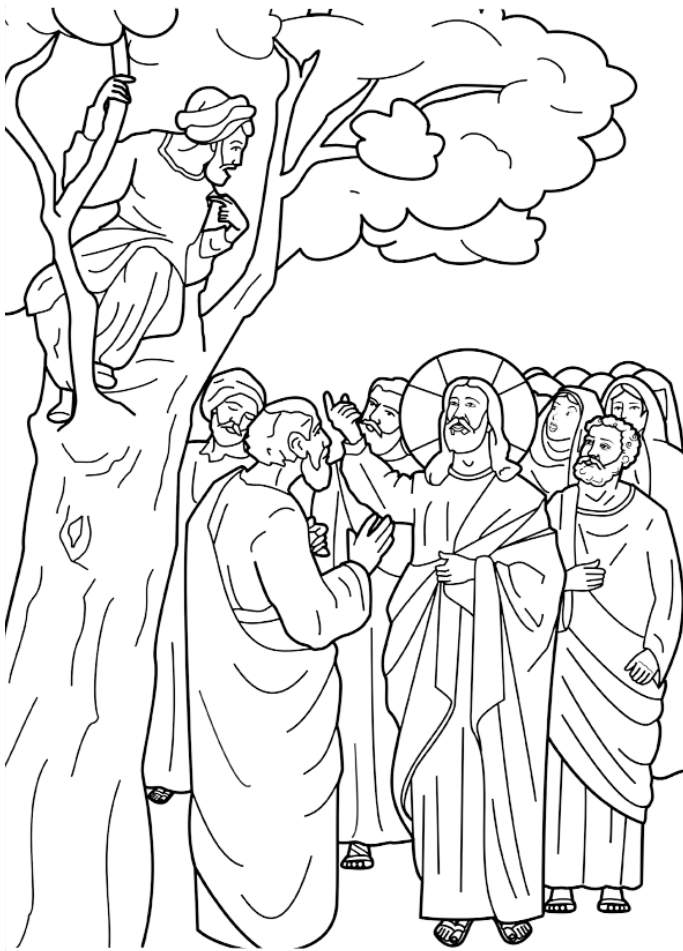
&

Tantum ergo



The encounter that can change our lives

The homily of POPE FRANCIS at the closing Mass of World Youth Day, Krakow July 2016



YOU have come to Kraków to meet Jesus.

Today's Gospel speaks to us of just such a meeting between Jesus and a man named Zacchaeus, in Jericho (Luke 19:1-10). Jesus does not simply preach or greet people; as the evangelist tells us, he passed through the city.

In other words, Jesus wants to draw near to us personally, to accompany our journey to its end, so that his life and our life can truly meet.

An amazing encounter then takes place, with Zacchaeus, the chief tax collector. Zacchaeus was a wealthy collaborator of the Roman occupiers, someone who exploited his own people, who, because of his ill repute, could not even approach the Master.

His encounter with Jesus changed his life - just as it has changed, and can daily still change, each of our lives.

But Zacchaeus had to face a number of obstacles in order to meet Jesus. At least three of these can also say something to us.

The first obstacle: 'Too little'

The first obstacle is smallness of stature.

Zacchaeus couldn't see the Master because he was little. Even today we can risk not getting close to Jesus because we don't feel big enough, because we don't think ourselves worthy.

This is a great temptation; it has to do not only with self-esteem, but with faith itself. For faith tells us that we are

"children of God... that is what we are" (1 John 3:1). We have been created in God's own image; Jesus has taken upon himself our humanity and his heart will never be separated from us; the Holy Spirit wants to dwell within us.

That is our real 'stature', our spiritual identity: we are God's beloved children, always. So you can see that not to accept ourselves, to live glumly, to be negative, means not to recognise our deepest identity. God loves us the way we are; and no sin, fault or mistake of ours makes him change his mind.

'In God's eyes, you are precious...'

As far as Jesus is concerned - as the Gospel shows - no one is unworthy of, or far from, his thoughts. God counts on you for what you are, not for what you possess. In his eyes the clothes you wear or the kind of mobile telephone you use are of absolutely no concern. He doesn't care whether you are stylish or not; he cares about you! In his eyes, you are precious, and your value is inestimable.

At times we aim lower rather than higher. At those times, it is good to realise that God remains faithful in his love for us. He loves us even more than we love ourselves. He believes in us even more than we believe in ourselves. He is there for us, waiting with patience and hope, even when we turn in on ourselves and brood over our troubles and past injuries.

But such brooding is unworthy of our spiritual stature: it is a kind of virus infecting and blocking everything; it closes doors and prevents us from getting up and beginning afresh. God believes that we can always get up, and he hates to see us gloomy. We are always his beloved sons and daughters. Let us be mindful of this at the dawn of each new day. It will do us good to pray every morning: 'Lord, I thank you for loving me; help me to be in love with my own life!'

The second obstacle: the paralysis of shame

Zacchaeus faced a second obstacle in meeting Jesus: the paralysis of shame. We can imagine what was going on in his heart before he climbed that sycamore. It must have been quite a struggle - on one hand, a healthy curiosity and desire to know Jesus; on the other, the risk of appearing ridiculous.

Zacchaeus knew that, in trying to climb that tree, he would become a laughing-stock to all. Yet he mastered his shame, because the attraction of Jesus was more powerful.

The paralysis of shame did not have the upper hand. The Gospel tells us that Zacchaeus ran ahead, climbed the tree, and then, when Jesus called him, hurried down (4,6). He took a risk; he put his life on the line.

For us too, this is the secret of joy: not to stifle a healthy curiosity, but to take a risk, because life is not meant to be tucked away. When it comes to Jesus, we cannot sit around waiting with arms folded.

Dear young friends, don't be ashamed to bring everything to the Lord in confession, especially your weaknesses, struggles and sins. He will surprise you with his peace. Don't be afraid to say 'Yes', to respond generously and to follow him! Say a firm 'no' to the narcotic of success at any cost and

the sedative of worrying only about yourself and your own comfort.

The third obstacle: the judgment of others

After his small stature and the paralysis of shame, there was a third obstacle that Zacchaeus had to face. It was all around him. It was the grumbling of the crowd, who blocked him and criticised him: How could Jesus have entered the house of a sinner!

How truly hard it is to welcome Jesus, how hard to accept a 'God who is rich in mercy' (Ephesians 2:4) People will try to block you, to make you think that God is distant, rigid and insensitive, good to the good and bad to the bad. Instead, our heavenly Father 'makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good' (Matthew 5:45). He demands of us the courage to be more powerful than evil by loving everyone, even our enemies.

People may laugh at you because you believe in the gentle power of mercy. But do not be afraid.

Belief in a new humanity

People may judge you to be dreamers, because you believe in a new humanity, one that rejects hatred between peoples, one that refuses to see borders as barriers and can cherish its own traditions without being self-centred or small-minded. Don't be discouraged: with a smile and open arms, you proclaim hope, and you are a blessing for our one human family.

The crowd looked down on Zacchaeus. But Jesus did otherwise: he gazed up at him. Jesus looks beyond the faults and sees the person. His gaze remains constant, even when it is not met; it seeks the way of unity and communion. It does it halt at appearances, but looks to the heart.

'Don't stop at the surface'

With this gaze of Jesus, you can help bring about another humanity, without looking for acknowledgement but seeking goodness for its own sake, content to fight peaceably for honesty and justice. Don't stop at the surface of things. Distrust the worldly cult of appearances, cosmetic attempts to improve our looks.

Let us listen to Jesus' words to Zacchaeus, which seem meant for us today: 'Come down, for I must stay at your house today' (v. 5).

Jesus extends the same invitation to you.

We can say that World Youth Day begins today and continues tomorrow in your homes, since that is where Jesus wants to meet you from now on. He wants to enter your homes, to dwell in your daily lives: in your studies, your first years of work, your friendships and affections, your hopes and dreams.

How greatly he desires that you bring all this to him in prayer! How much he wants his word to be able to speak to you day after day, so that you can make his Gospel your own, so that it can serve as a compass for you on the highways of life!

In asking to come to your house, Jesus calls you, as he did Zacchaeus, by name.

Trust the memory of God: his memory is not a 'hard disk' that

'saves' all our data, but a heart filled with compassion.

May we try to imitate the faithful memory of God and treasure the good things. In silence, let us remember this encounter, let us preserve the memory of the presence of God and his word, and let us listen once more to the voice of Jesus as he calls us by name.



'You can make Christ's Gospel your own, so that it can serve as a compass for you on the highways of life'

The Pope's Prayer Intentions



October

- That journalists, in carrying out their work, may always be motivated by respect for truth and a strong sense of ethics.
- That World Mission Day may renew within all Christian communities the joy of the Gospel and the responsibility to announce it.

November

- That the countries which take in a great number of displaced persons and refugees may find support for their efforts which show solidarity.
- That within parishes, priests and lay people may collaborate in service to the community without giving in to the temptation of discouragement.

from beyond the diocese

Pope Francis presides at Mother Teresa's canonisation

THE CANONISATION of Mother Teresa of Calcutta took place on Sunday 4th September, when at a special Mass in St Peter's Square in Rome, Pope Francis declared Teresa a saint in the Catholic calendar. Her memorial day will be 5th September.

St Teresa's canonisation Mass was preceded by a 'family feast' for the poor, a musical, Masses and prayer vigils. On the following day there was a Thanksgiving Mass in St Peter's Basilica for the first memorial of St Teresa of Calcutta, celebrated by Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State.

'Humble messenger'



The Vatican anticipated the canonisation of Mother Teresa with the issue of a postage stamp,

A press release said of Teresa, 'She was a humble messenger of the Gospel and of Christ's love... She assisted the poor, the sick and the abandoned with tireless dedication, offering smiles and simple gestures, finding strength to

persevere with her vocation through prayer and trust in God.'

Born Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu in 1910 to an Albanian family in Skopje, in what is now part of Macedonia, Mother Teresa went to India as a Sister of Loreto in 1929. Receiving what she described as a 'call within a call', she began her missionary work with the poor and laid the foundation for what would become the Missionaries of Charity.

Following her death in 1997, St John Paul II waived the usual five-year waiting period and allowed the opening of the process to declare her sainthood. She was beatified (declared 'Blessed') in 2003.

Church leaders meet Pope in Assisi

THE ORTHODOX Patriarch Bartholomew, the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch, Ignatius Aphrem II, the Archbishop of Canterbury and leaders of the Muslim, Jewish and Buddhist communities gathered in Assisi, Italy, on Tuesday 20th September to pray for peace. The theme was 'Thirst for Peace: Faiths and Cultures in Dialogue'.

Pope Francis and the other religious leaders were marking the 30th anniversary of the first World Day of Prayer in 1986, when leaders representing 32 Christian organisations and 11 other religions converged to pray and fast together.

Later, the Pope held private meetings with many religious leaders.

After prayers, the Pope and religious leaders met in the square outside the basilica to listen to the testimony of a victim of war, to share their thoughts about peace-making and to sign a common appeal.

Sisters stay put in Aleppo



CARMELITE nuns have chosen to remain in their convent in Syria in spite of continuous airstrikes from both Syrian and Russian forces.

Sr Anne-Françoise of Aleppo's Discalced Carmelite Sisters said, 'The bombs are falling all around us, but we are not going to leave the people in their suffering.'

The Carmelite convent is situated on the outskirts of Aleppo, an area under constant siege. The sisters say that many of the city's citizens - including Christians - have left since the war began, and only the very poorest remain. The sisters have taken in a number of families whose homes have been destroyed in air-strikes.

Only 40,000 Christians are thought to remain in Aleppo. Pre-war estimates put the Christian population at 160,000.

Sr Anne-Françoise added: 'The Middle East, the land of Christ, now risks becoming empty of Christians. That is unthinkable, and the situation is truly terrible.'

Former Manchester United player to become priest

A FORMER Manchester United player has made his solemn profession as a Dominican friar.

Philip Mulryne made five appearances for Manchester United, 27 for Northern Ireland and 161 for Norwich City. In 2008 he retired from football in 2008 to try his vocation to the priesthood.

After four years of formation, Mulryne recently made his profession 'until death'. The next steps are ordination to the diaconate, and then to the priesthood.

Malryne, a mid-fielder, gained a place in Manchester United in the era of David Beckham. After his move to Norwich he flourished, and was part of the team that gained promotion to England's premier league. He later had spells with Cardiff and Ipswich.

A former team-mate, Paul McVeigh, reacted with 'amazement' when he heard that Malryne was hoping to be a priest: 'I knew he was doing a lot of charitable work and helping the homeless... Still, it was a complete shock that he felt this was his calling.' He added that when he visited his friend in Rome, he found a 'very contented-looking Phil.'

Keep up-to-date with your Diocese!

Visit www.banjuldiocese.gm

'Care for our common home'

POPE Francis is proposing adding care for the environment to the traditional, Gospel-inspired works of mercy that Christians are called to perform.

He made the proposal in a message on Thursday 1st September to mark the Church's World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, which he instituted last year in a bid to highlight his green agenda.

The Pope said: 'The Christian life involves the practice of the traditional seven corporal and seven spiritual works of mercy. We usually think of the works of mercy individually and in relation to a specific initiative: hospitals for the sick, soup kitchens for the hungry, shelters for the homeless, schools for those to be educated, the confessional and spiritual direction for those needing counsel and forgiveness... But if we look at the works of mercy as a whole, we see that the object of mercy is human life itself and everything it embraces.

'Obviously human life itself and everything it embraces includes care for our common home. So let me propose a complement to the two traditional sets of seven: may the works of mercy also include care for our common home.

'As a spiritual work of mercy, care for our common home calls for a grateful contemplation of God's world, which allows us to discover in each thing a teaching which God wishes to hand on to us.

'As a corporal work of mercy, care for our common home requires simple daily gestures which break with the logic of violence, exploitation and selfishness and makes itself felt in every action that seeks to build a better world.'

The Pope's proposal is the logical extension of his ecological encyclical, *Laudato Si*, issued last year.

The Pope called for a revolution to correct what he said was a 'structurally perverse' economic system in which the rich exploit the poor and turn the Earth into an 'immense pile of filth'.

Pope and Archbishop



THE ARCHBISHOP of Canterbury, Justin Welby - senior bishop of the Anglican Communion - met Pope Francis on Wednesday 5th October in Rome to celebrate Vespers in the Basilica of San Gregorio al Celio.

Afterwards, the Pope and the Archbishop sent 19 pairs of Catholic and Anglican bishops to travel throughout the world.

The following day, the Pope and the archbishop held private talks on ecumenical relations.



Mari Yeg Na Cha Kaw Asaman

ON Saturday 20th August Gambians and their friends from all over the United Kingdom and from as far afield as Germany and Sweden gathered at St Chad's Cathedral in Birmingham to celebrate *Sang Marie* in Gambian style.

The celebrant and preacher was Fr Peter S. Lopez, Director of the Gambia Pastoral Institute,

After the Mass, a reception was held at St Chad's Primary School.

This year's celebration was organised by the Gambian Christian Community of Birmingham and the Black Country.

In previous years, the event has been celebrated in Slough, west of London, and in London.

Birmingham is Britain's largest city, after London. The Black Country is the highly-industrialised area in the West Midlands.

Floodlit London churches to highlight plight of Middle-East Christians

LONDON'S Westminster Cathedral and Westminster Abbey are to be floodlit in red this November to highlight the plight of persecuted Christians in the Middle East.

Writing for the Catholic Truth Society, Lord Alton of Liverpool said: 'We heard of how a Christian pastor in a village of Aleppo was told to convert or die. He was forced to watch as his 12-year-old son was tortured: the boy's fingers cut from his hand. Neither the father or son renounced their faith, and both were executed.

'It's high time we stood with those who are suffering or dying for their beliefs: with the Christians of the Middle East; with the Iranian, Saeed Abedini, who was imprisoned for 10 years for "undermining national security" by hosting Christian gatherings in his home; with Chinese Catholics like the late Bishop Cosmas Shi Enxiang, who died last year at 94 years of age, having spent half his life in prison; with the Chinese Christians who, since the beginning of 2016, have seen 49 of their churches defaced or destroyed, crosses removed and a pastor's wife crushed to death in the rubble as she pleaded with the authorities to desist; with the Christians targeted by groups like ISIS, the Taliban, Al Shabab and Boko Haram.'

The charity Action for the Church in Need has investigated 30 countries where Christianity is under threat, and concluded that in some areas it risks being wiped out altogether. In 20 of the 30 countries, the situation has worsened since 2011. In others, where the problems were already extreme, there has been little or no change.



Best Wishes

to our Muslim Brothers and Sisters
on the occasion of Muharram
Islamic New Year



Gambian Christian Anniversaries

October and November

55 YEARS AGO: On 17th November 1961 a government bill was published establishing the Common Entrance Examination for all publicly-funded secondary schools. Although the Catholic mission was opposed to the change, in February 1963 Bishop Michael Moloney felt obliged to accept the exam as the means by which pupils would be granted places in Catholic schools.

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

15th October 1884: Opening of Bethel Methodist Church, Banjul.

26th October 1905: Arrival of Fr John Meehan. His fellow priests were Fr Pierre Wieder and Fr Miesterman, Holy Ghost Fathers from Alsace, northern France, and a Senegambian priest, Fr Gabriel Sanneh.

16th October 1931 (85 years ago): Fr Meehan was nominated first Ecclesiastical Superior of the Banjul Mission, which in May that year had become self-governing.

28th October 1932: Arrival of Fr McEnnis to take over the management of the schools. But in April the following year he was invalided back to Ireland, never to return.

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

21st November 1936 (80 years ago): 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).

12th October 1944: Arrival of Fr Andrew Carroll, who died in Ireland in October 2009.

10th October 1945: 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 (65 years ago): Fr Moloney was named Prefect of the Banjul Mission, which had been designated a Prefecture Apostolic on 15th April that year.

October 1952: Arrival of Fr William Costelloe and Fr Reginald Gillooly.

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

3rd October 1959: Building began in Bakau of Stella Maris Church (Star of the Sea)

20th October 1965: Arrival of Fr John Sharpe.

17th October 1966 (50 years ago): Arrival of Fr John Hogan.

3rd October 1967: Arrival of Fr Michael Casey (*right*)

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

27th October 1970: Arrival of Fr Robert Ellison.

12th November 1972: Blessing by Bishop Moloney of the Junior Seminary at Fajara. The first Director was Fr Pierre Sagna (later, Bishop Sagna). Among the 19 students were Fr Anthony Gabisi and Fr Peter Gomez.

4th November 1976 (40 years ago): First meeting of all Mission personnel to work out a pastoral plan for the diocese.

31st October 1981 (35 years ago): Departure due to ill health of Fr Michael Murray.

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: President Jammeh appointed Bishop Cleary a Commander of the Order of the Republic of The Gambia.

13th November 2000: 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 the school at Lamin, and Vicar-General.

6th October 2005: Death in Ireland of Sr Benigna Kearney, who had taught in The Gambia for more than 50 years.

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

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

17th October 2008: Death in the USA of Arthur K. Carrol, Methodist who after retiring as head of Gambia Public Transport Corporation worked for the Catholic charity Caritas.

10th-18th November 2008: Fr Peter Conaty, former GPI Director, returned after 20 years to lead a workshop on the liturgy for priests, religious and choir leaders.

21st November 2008: Fr John Mendy was ordained at Farafenni by Bishop Ellison.

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: Fr Yenes Manneh was ordained at Brikama by Bishop Ellison.

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

1st-10th October 2010: St Calixte Thomas, St Josephine Kamada, St Teresa Mundow and Sr Jeanne-Therese Ndey joined Cluny Sisters from all Africa at a synod in Dakar which considered the implementation of the 2009 Synod of African Bishops.

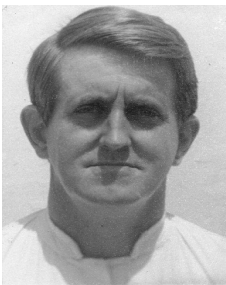
20th November 2010: President Yahya Jammeh launched 'From Jerusalem to Calvary', by George Gomez.

10th November 2012: at Lamin, Bishop Ellison ordained Fr Aimé Joseph Colley and Fr Matthew M. Mendy.

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

1st November 2013: The Papal Nuncio, Archbishop Miroslaw Adamczyk, presented his credentials to President Jammeh.

9th November 2013: At Brikama, Bishop Ellison ordained Fr Victor Ndecky.





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Who wants to be a saint?



WHEN we do something wrong, or offend someone, we may say, 'I know I'm no saint.'

This is probably all too true. But do we actually want to become a saint?

Who, indeed, are the saints, so honoured by the Church?

The saints are those, throughout history and all over the world, who have striven to discern and obey the will of God.

Thank God we cannot tell how many saints there are. Each year the Church celebrates many of them (for example, in November such heroes as Charles Borromeo, Cecilia, Elizabeth of Hungary and Andrew the apostle). But the names of most of the saints are known only to God.

Some saints were holy throughout their lives. Others struggled and suffered before achieving sanctity. But all the saints were - and are - witnesses to the saving power of God.

Perfect people?

We may think of saints as perfect people. But a saint is rather someone who has given God first place in his or her life.

This is perhaps why some of us, even if unconsciously, hold back from wanting to become a saint. We hope that just by living quiet, uncontroversial, fairly devout lives we may get through our time on this earth without too much stress, and in due course enjoy the life of the world to come.

Maybe. But the saints are made of sterner stuff. All of them, in one way or another, have heeded Christ's call: 'Take up your cross.'

Carrying the cross

Some saints have indeed lived quiet lives. St Therese, for example, understood that she could serve God in 'little things'. But she was not without spiritual struggles, and she had a cross to bear: her poor health, which took her to an early grave.

Other saints, such as Charles Lwanga of Uganda, when faced with a choice between Christ and the powers of this world, have chosen to give up their lives, like Christ himself, rather than deny their faith. We call such saints 'martyrs' (which is Greek for 'witnesses').

And witnesses, in one way or another, is what Christ wants us to be. For this we were baptised, for this we were confirmed, for this we receive Holy Communion, for this we are called Christians.

It may be that our witness will consist in serving Christ and the Church quietly in our family and at work (though even a 'quiet life' may have tribulations and challenges).

On the other hand, it may be that we are called to serve Christ in a more dramatic, perhaps controversial way.

Has our country produced any saints?

Has The Gambia produced any saints? We may be confident that it has, and that there are saints among us this very day.

Do we have faith and courage enough to join them?

The Catholic Church in this country is not simply a small community at the fringes of the Universal Church. Like Catholics everywhere, Gambian Catholics are at the heart of the Church, because they are at the heart of Christ.

Thus, in our diocese and country, we are Christ's witnesses. We should ask God for the faith and courage to bear witness to him day by day, in sincerity and truth. There is no 'off day' for Christians!

In the third Eucharistic Prayer we ask

...that we may obtain an inheritance with your elect, especially the most Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, with your blessed apostles and glorious martyrs, and all the saints, on whose constant intercession in your presence we rely for unfailing help...



Praying for the departed – and for ourselves

THE NICENE creed that we say or sing at Holy Mass every Sunday contains the essentials of our Christian faith.

The closing words of the creed are, 'I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.'

Yes, we Christians 'desire a better country – that is, a heavenly one' (Hebrews 11:16).

Death is the lot of every man and woman. But death is not the end. It is the beginning of a new life. That new life may find us close to Christ - or we may feel horribly far from him.

Let us not forget that our closeness to Christ and his glory, or our remoteness from him, will depend on how we have spent this life.

We may take God's wonderful gift of faith for granted. We may also, like the timid man in the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30) fail to make good use of our earthly life.

What happens next, beyond the grave, depends on God's mercy.

God's mercy is always much greater than we deserve, but we dare not presume that it will operate if we have shown God little friendship – even less, if we have deliberately ignored or rejected him.

Catholics spend a good deal of their prayer life remembering those whose life on earth is over, particularly the baptised who on earth regularly received Christ in Holy Communion.

There is one particular day - 2nd November - when we commemorate the 'faithful departed'; and one particular month - November - when we pray particularly for the dead.

But never throughout the year do we neglect to pray for the departed, especially for those we have personally known and loved.

We pray, too, as the Fourth Eucharistic Prayer has it, 'for all the dead whose faith you alone have known.'

Purgatory

Many of the departed are in purgatory, being prepared for a fuller life.

We pray for all the souls in purgatory, and when we do so we must surely resolve to spend whatever time remains for us in this life trying daily to know God better and to serve him and our neighbour more faithfully.

Death, heaven, hell and purgatory: we need to reflect on these states of being understood by the Catholic Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Catholicism and death

by Fr Alexander Lucie-Smith

DEATH is certain. No amount of wishful thinking can brush it away, so each of us needs to face our own mortality. Death is the conclusion of life, and it is also part of life - we live it every day.

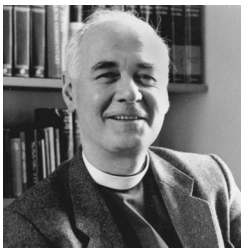
It seems to me that Catholicism is realistic about death, and that is healthy. Those of us who pray to the Madonna saying, 'Pray for us now and in the hour of our death' have got it right.

As for purgatory, this is a profoundly optimistic and reassuring doctrine. When we die, we cannot possibly (with a very few exceptions) hope to stand in front of God and measure up to his infinite moral purity. We will still be in need of purgation and purification, and it is reassuring to know that

this process, begun on earth, can continue in the next world, and that those on earth and in heaven can help us by their prayers and their good works. Evil exists, and we have done evil, but the good news is that we can be redeemed, and purgatory is the ultimate second chance given to us by God.

Denying purgatory, as many Protestants do, means of course that either very few will ever see God in the after-life, or else that our evil deeds are not really purged but rather 'imputed righteous' by God, which is not the same thing.

Taken from The Catholic Herald, London



An essential component in Christian hope

JOHN Polkinghorne, an Anglican priest and former Cambridge professor of mathematical physics, wrote in his book, 'Living with Hope':

'A process of purgation will surely be an indispensable preliminary before we are allowed to approach nearer to the holy reality of God...The idea of purification, and the concept of purgatory that goes with it, are essential components in the Christian hope for the life of the world to come.'

Polkinghorne quoted St Paul: 'For no one can lay any foundation than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ. Now if any one builds on that foundation ... the work of that builder will become visible, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each has done. If what has been built on the foundation survives, the builder will receive a reward. If the work is burned, the builder will suffer loss; the builder will be saved, but only as through fire.' (1 Corinthians 3: 11-15)

Answers to Do You Know? page 4



- 1 Goliath (1 Samuel 17)
- 2 A cross (left) does not display the figure of the crucified Christ, whereas a crucifix (right) does.
- 3 St Luke's Gospel (chapter 10:29-37)
- 4 'So let it be', from the Hebrew for 'truly'. Used by Jews, Christians and Muslims.
- 5 In Istanbul, Hagia Sofia (Greek for 'Holy Wisdom'; Turkish, Aya Sofya). This church, described as one of world's finest architectural creations, was built between AD 532 and 537. In 1453 it was converted into a mosque. Since the 1930s it has been a museum.



Some weekday celebrations in October and November



Saturday 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 moved to Lisieux. She wanted to follow two of her sisters in the religious life, but was told she was too young. But in 1888 she 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 died from tuberculosis aged only 24 on 30th September 1897. Her autobiography, *L'Histoire d'une Ame* ('The Story of a Soul') was published after Therese's death.

It became a best-seller. Therese was canonised in 1925. In this diocese, we pray especially today for the priests and people of the parish of St Therese Kanifing.

Tuesday 11th October: St John XIII *pope*

JOHN XXIII was born Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli in the village of Sotto il Monte in Italy in November 1881, the fourth of 14 children born to poor farmers. He was ordained in 1904 and served in a various posts, including Papal Nuncio in France and a delegate to Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey. In 1953 Pope Pius XII made him Cardinal Patriarch of Venice. Following the death of Pius XII in 1958, Roncalli was elected Pope, taking the title, John XXIII. It was expected that he would only serve a short time, but he convened the Second Vatican Council, with far-reaching consequences for the Church throughout the world. In late 1962 John was diagnosed with stomach cancer. On 3rd June 1963 he died, aged 81. In 2000 Pope St John Paul II beatified him. Pope Francis approved John XXIII for canonisation on 3rd June 2013, the 50th anniversary of his death.



Wednesday 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, Canada, as a missionary. The Huron Indians were awed by his height and strength, but he made few converts except among the dying 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, tortured and forced to run naked. 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.

Saturday 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 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. He improved Catholic relations with Judaism, Islam, the Orthodox and the Anglican Communion. He was one of the most travelled leaders in history, visiting 129 countries. He canonised 483 saints - more than all his predecessors combined during the preceding five centuries. He died in 2005, the second longest-serving Pope since Pius IX (1846-1878). In 2009 John Paul II was proclaimed Venerable by Pope Benedict XVI. He was beatified on 1st May 2011, and canonised by Pope Francis on 27th April 2014, together with Pope John XXIII.



Friday 4th November: St Charles Borromeo *bishop*

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

Wednesday 9th November: Dedication of St John Lateran

THE POPE'S cathedral as Bishop of Rome is not St Peter's, but St John Lateran, dedicated in 324. This feast was at first celebrated only in Rome, but 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.

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

LEO was born towards the end of the 4th century in Italy. As Pope from 440 to 451 he championed orthodoxy. Leo's teachings as the 'Voice of Peter' were embraced by the fourth ecumenical council of the Church held at Chalcedon (Kadikoy, Turkey) in 451; and his example, letters and sermons contributed to the growth of papal authority.

Daily Mass Readings

Sunday readings Year C Weekday readings Year 2



October & November

Celebrations in brackets () are optional

Sat 1st Oct	Job 42:1-3,5-6,12-16. Psalm 118:66,71,75,91,125,130. Luke 10:17-24	St Therese of Lisieux
Sun 2nd	Habbakkuk 1:2-3;2:2-4. Psalm 94:1-2,6-9. 2 Timothy 1:6-8,13-14. Luke 17:5-10	27th SUNDAY of YEAR
Mon 3rd	Galatians 1:6-12. Psalm 110:1-2,7-9. Luke 10:25-37	
Tue 4th	Galatians 1:13-24. Psalm 138:1-3,13-15. Luke 10:38-42	St Francis of Assisi
Wed 5th	Galatians 2:1-2,7-14. Psalm 116:1-2. Luke 11:1-4	(St Bruno)
Thu 6th	Galatians 3:15. Psalm Luke 1:69-75. Luke 11:5-23	Our Lady of the Rosary <i>abstinence</i>
Fri 7th	Acts 1:12-14. Psalm Luke 1:46-55. Luke 1:26-38	(of the BVM)
Sat 8th	Galatians 3:22-29. Psalm 104:2-7. Luke 11:27-28	
Sun 9th	2 Kings 5:14-17. Psalm 97:1-4. 2 Timothy 2:8-15. Luke 17:11-19.	28th SUNDAY of YEAR
Mon 10th	Galatians 4:22-24,26-27,31 - 5:1. Psalm 112;1-7. Luke 11:29-32	
Tue 11th	Galatians 5:1-6. Psalm 118:41,43=48. Luke 11: 37-41	(St John XXIII)
Wed 12th	Galatians 5:18-25. Psalm 1:1-4,6. Luke 11:42-46	
Thu 13th	Ephesians 1:1-10. Psalm 97:1-6. Luke 11:47-54	
Fri 14th	Ephesians 1:11-14. Psalm 32:1-2,4-5,12-13. Luke 12:1-7	(St Callistus) <i>abstinence</i>
Sat 15th	Ephesians 1:15-23. Psalm 8:2-7. Luke 12:8-12	St Teresa of Jesus
Sun 16th	Exodus 17:8-13. Psalm 120:1-8. 2 Timothy 3:14 - 4:2. Luke 18:1-8	29th SUNDAY of YEAR
Mon 17th	Ephesians 2:1-10. Psalm 99:2-5. Luke 12:13-21	St Ignatius of Antioch
Tue 18th	2 Timothy 4:10-17. Psalm 144:10-13,17-18. Luke 10:1-9	St LUKE
Wed 19th	Ephesians 3:2-12. Psalm Isaiah 12:2-6. Luke 12:13-21.	(St John de Brebeuf or St Paul of the Cross)
Thu 20th	Luke 12:39-48	
Fri 21st	Ephesians 4:1-6. Psalm 23:1-6. Luke 12:54-59	<i>abstinence</i>
Sat 22nd	Ephesians 4:7-16. Psalm 121:1-5. Luke 13:1-9	(St John Paul II)
Sun 23rd	Sirach 35:15-17,20-22. Psalm 33:2-3,17-19,23. 2 Timothy 4:6-9,216-18. Luke 18:9-14	30th SUNDAY of YEAR
Mon 24th	Ephesians 4:32 - 5:8. Psalm 1:1-4,6. Luke 13:10-17	(St Antony Mary Claret)
Tue 25th	Ephesians 5:21-33. Psalm 127:1-5. Luke 13:18-21	
Wed 26th	Ephesians 6:1-9. Psalm 144:10-14. Luke 13:22-30	
Thu 27th	Ephesians 6:10-20. Psalm 143:1-2,9-10. Luke 13:31-35	
Fri 28th	Ephesians 2:19-22. Psalm 18:2-5. Luke 6:12-19	St SIMON & St JUDE <i>abstinence</i>
Sat 29th	Philemon 1:18-26. Psalm 41:2-3,5. Luke 14:1,7-11	(of the BVM)
Sun 30th	Wisdom 11:22 - 12:2. Psalm 144:1-2,8-11,13-14. 2 Thessalonians 1:11 - 2:2. Luke 19:1-10.	31st SUNDAY of YEAR
Mon 31st	Philippians 2:1-4. Psalm 130:1-3. Luke 14:12-14	
Tue 1st Nov	Revelation 7:2-4,9-14. Psalm 23:1-6. 1 John 3;1-3. Matthew 5:1-12	ALL SAINTS
Wed 2nd	Isaiah 25:6-9. Psalm 27. Mark 15:33-39 & 16:1-6 (<i>alternative readings provided</i>)	ALL SOULS
Thu 3rd	Philippians 3:3-8. Psalm 104:2-7. Luke 15:1-10	(St Martin de Porres)
Fri 4th	Philippians 3:17 - 4:1:1. Psalm 111:1-2,5-6,8-9. Luke 16:9-15	St Charles Borromeo <i>abstinence</i>
Sat 5th	Philippians 4:10-19. Psalm 111:1-2,5-6,8-9. Luke 16:9-15	(of the BVM)
Sun 6th	2 Maccabees 7:1-2,9-14. Psalm 16:1,5-6,8,15. 2 Thessalonians 2:16 - 3:5. Luke 20:27-38	32nd SUNDAY of YEAR
Mon 7th	Titus 1:1-9. Psalm 23:1-6. Luke 17:1-6	
Tue 8th	Titus 2;1-8,11-14. Psalm 36:2,18,23,27,29. Luke 17:7-10.	
Wed 9th	Exodus 47:1-2,8-9,12 or 1 Corinthians 3:9-11,16-17. Psalm 45:2-3,5-6,8-9. John 2:13-22	St JOHN LATERAN
Thu 10th	Philemon 7-20. Psalm 145:6-10. Luke 17:20-25	St Leo the Great
Fri 11th	2 John 4-9. Psalm 118:1-2,10-11,17-18. Luke 17:26-37	St Martin of Tours <i>abstinence</i>
Sat 12th	3 John 5-8. Psalm 111:1-6. Luke 18:1-8	(St Josaphat or of the BVM)
Sun 13th	Malachi 3:19-20. Psalm 97:5-9. 2 Thessalonians 3:7-12. Luke 21;5-19	33rd SUNDAY of YEAR
Mon 14th	Revelation 1:1-4; 2:1-5. Psalm 1:1-4,6. Luke Luke 18:35-43	
Tue 15th	Revelation 3:1-6,14-22. Psalm 14:2-5. Luke 19:1-10	(St Albert the Great)
Wed 16th	Revelation 4:1-11. Psalm 150:1-6. Luke 19:11-28	(St Margaret of Scotland or St Gertrude)
Thu 17th	Revelation 5:1-10. Psalm 149:1-6,9. Luke 19:41-44	(St Elizabeth of Hungary)
Fri 18th	Revelation 10:8-11. Psalm 118:14,24,72,103,111,131. Luke 19:45-48	(Dedication of Basilica of St Peter & St Paul)
Sat 19th	(or, for Peter & Paul: Acts 28:11-16,30-31. Psalm 98:1-6. Matthew 14:22-23. Revelation 11:4-12. Psalm 143;1-2,9-10. Luke 20:27-40	<i>abstinence</i> (of the BVM)
Sun 20th	2 Samuel 5:1-3. Psalm 121:1-2,4-5. Colossians 1:12-20. Luke 23:35-43.	CHRIST the KING
Mon 21st	Zechariah 2:14-17. Psalm Luke 1:46-55. Matthew 12:46-50	Presentation of Mary
Tue 22nd	Revelation 14:14-19. Psalm 95:10,10-13. Luke 21:5-11	St Cecilia
Wed 23rd	Revelation 15:1-4. Psalm 97:1-3,7-9. Luke 21:12-19	(St Clement or St Columban)
Thu 24th	Revelation 18:1-2,21-23; 19:1-3,9. Psalm 99:2-5. Luke 21:20-28	St Andrew Dung-Lac
Fri 25th	Revelation 20:1-4,11 - 21:2. Psalm 83:3-6,8. Luke 21:29-33	(St Catherine of Alexandria) <i>abstinence</i>
Sat 26th	Revelation 22:1-7. Psalm 94:1-7. Luke 21: 34-36	(of the BVM)

Sunday 27th (1st Sunday of Advent) - Wednesday 30th November: see December 2016 /January 2017 Newsletter

End-
piece

The Catholic Church is growing - *as never before!*

IN many parts of the world, it's difficult to feel optimistic about the future of the Catholic Church. But the Church - which is already, by far, the largest religious institution on the planet - is in fact enjoying global growth on an unprecedented scale.

In 1950, the world's Catholic population was 437 million, a figure that grew to 650 million by 1970, and to around 1.2 billion today. Put another way, Catholic numbers have doubled since 1970, and that change has occurred during all the recent controversies and crises within the Church, all the debates following Vatican II and all the claims about the rise of secularism.

Nor does the rate of growth show any sign of diminishing. By 2050, a conservative estimate suggests there should be at least 1.6 billion Catholics.

There are thriving Catholic populations in Brazil, Mexico and the Philippines, which today constitute the Church's three largest population centres.

Mexico's population has swelled from 50 million in 1970 to 121 million today, so of course there are lots more Catholics in that country. The Philippines claim 80 million Catholics, a number that will probably increase to well over 100 million by 2050. Last year, there were more Catholic baptisms in the Philippines than in France, Spain, Italy and Poland combined.

Half a billion African Christians

A cynical observer might say that Church growth is solely the result of surging populations in particular regions where Catholicism happens to be the default religion.

Certainly, demographics plays its part in religious change, but this is by no means the whole story, and the clearest proof of this is found in Africa.

Back in 1900, Africa had perhaps 10 million Christians of all denominations, constituting some 10 per cent of the whole population. Today, there are half a billion African Christians, accounting for half the continent's population, and that number should exceed a billion by the 2040s.

Since 1980, the number of African Catholics has grown by 238 per cent. This phenomenal growth - which is, incidentally,



by far the largest quantitative change that has ever occurred in any religion, anywhere - is in part the result of the continent's overall population growth.

In 1900, there were three Europeans for every African. By 2050, there will be three Africans for every European. But this expansion is also, clearly, the result of mass conversions.

During the 20th century, some 40 per cent of Africa's people shifted their allegiance from older primal faiths to Christianity.

Although Catholics do not represent the whole of this African story, they are a very significant part of it.

In 1900, the whole of Africa had just a couple of million Catholics, but that number grew to 130 million by the end of the century, and today it approaches 200 million.

If current trends continue, as they show every sign of doing, then by the 2040s there will be some 460 million African Catholics. Incredibly, that number would be greater than the total world population of Catholics as it stood in 1950.

Africa will be first!

Already by about 2030, we will cross a historic milestone when the number of Catholics in Africa will exceed the number for Europe.

A few years after that, Africa will overtake Latin America to claim the title of the most Catholic continent.

Within just a generation from now, a list of the 10 nations with the largest Catholic populations will include several names where Catholicism was virtually new in 1900: African lands such as Nigeria, Uganda, Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Nor is this just an African story. Just since 1980, the total number of African Catholics grew by 238 per cent, while the equivalent rate in Asia was 115 per cent, and 56 per cent in the Americas.

When we consider those African statistics alone, any suggestion of the Catholic Church 'dying' or even stagnating is so wildly inaccurate as to be comical.





Germany's Catholic Bishops call Martin Luther 'teacher of the faith'

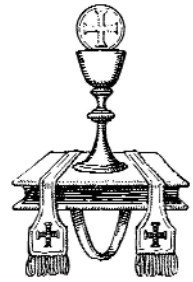
GERMANY'S Catholic bishops have praised Martin Luther as a 'Gospel witness and teacher of the faith'.

In a report, Bishop Gerhard Feige of Magdeburg, chairman of the German Bishops' Ecumenical Commission, said: 'The history of the Reformation has encountered a changeable reception in the Catholic Church, where its events and protagonists were long seen in a negative, derogatory light. While the wounds are still felt to the present day, it is gratifying that Catholic theology has succeeded, in the meantime, in soberly reconsidering the events of the 16th century.'

Bishop Feige said that there was a consensus that previous mutual condemnations were invalid. 'Memories of the Reformation and the subsequent separation of Western Christianity are not free from pain. But through lengthy ecumenical dialogue, the theological differences rooted in the period have been re-evaluated.'

The report said that the 'Catholic Church may recognise today what was important in the Reformation: namely, that Sacred Scripture is the centre and standard for all Christian life. 'Connected with this is Martin Luther's fundamental insight that Jesus Christ is the centre of Scripture and the only mediator.'

Congratulations



During November, eight priests celebrate the Anniversary of their Ordination

Thursday 10th November Fr Aimé Joseph Colley
Fr Matthew Mendy

Saturday 12th November Fr Joseph Carl Gomez 2003
Fr Gabriel Mendy 2007
Fr Antoine Sambou 2007
Fr Bruno Toupan 2007

Monday 14th November Fr Yenes Manneh 2009

Tuesday 17th November Fr Louis Mendy CSSp 2011

A Prayer for our Priests

GOD our Father, grant to our priests a firm faith, zeal in proclaiming the Gospel, and diligence in administering the Sacraments.

May their life of prayer and service enable them to inspire and lead those committed to their care.

We make our prayer through our great High Priest, Jesus Christ our Lord.



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‘Zacchaeus, hurry and come down!’

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through it. A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax-collector, and was rich. He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was coming to pass that way.

When Jesus reached the spot he looked up and said to him, ‘Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today.’ So he hurried down, and was happy to welcome him.

All who saw it began to grumble, and said, ‘He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner.’

Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, ‘Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.’

Then Jesus said to him, ‘Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost.’

Luke 19:1-10.

Gospel reading for the 31st Sunday in Ordinary Time, 30th October

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