

# *The Diocese of Banjul* **NEWSLETTER**

*Incorporating The Catholic Newsletter*

## ***Sang Marie - Banjul's big day***



***Thoughts, prayers and readings for Mass  
on all the Sundays in August and September***







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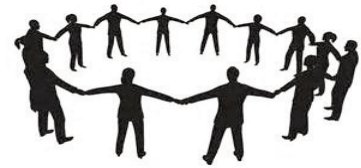
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By way of introduction

# Making the most of August



MENTION the month of August to a Catholic, and he or she will probably think of the world-wide feast of the Assumption - known in The Gambia, of course, simply as 'Saint Mary' - *Sang Marie*.

Mention *Sang Marie* to a resident of Banjul, Catholic or otherwise, and he or she will think of the colourful afternoon procession in honour of Mary, Mother of Jesus, from Holy Spirit Church to the Cathedral, which attracts enthusiastic crowds, both Christian and Muslim.

Later in August, about a week after *Sang Marie*, Gambian Muslims, and Muslims throughout the world, will celebrate *Eid-el-Adha*, or *Tobaski*.

On such religious 'high-days' as *Sang Marie* and *Tobaski*, we are reminded that though this country has a secular constitution the great majority of our people acknowledge Almighty God as Creator and Preserver of all mankind. This shared belief creates a strong bond between Gambians, regardless of religious affiliation. We should be thankful, always, that here in The Gambia, Muslims and Christians respect each other and pray for each other. Indeed, our history, despite its ups and downs, has been generally remarkable for peace and inter-communal harmony.

Mary - particularly celebrated on 15th August, and revered throughout the year - freely accepted God's will that she should give birth to his Son.

Centuries before Mary, the Patriarch Abraham submitted to God in accepting that, if required of him, he would sacrifice his own son.

Such obedience and submission to the Almighty is what

we are all called on to seek.

Jesus himself submitted himself to the Father's will. In the Garden of Gethsemane, before his passion, he prayed: 'Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will be done.' (Luke 22:47).

Jesus, for Christians, is the great exemplar, the One to whom we turn in good times and times of in trial. Only he, we believe, can save us from our timidity, backsliding and selfishness.

As we give thanks for the example of Mary, we need also to ask for her prayers that we, too, through God's grace and mercy, may find a place in heaven.

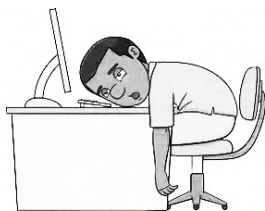
The Gospel makes clear that Jesus treated everyone, regardless of gender or ethnic background, as a child of God and a member of the one human family. That is why the Church is not a closed club. We value and rely on our distinctive beliefs and religious practices, and commend them to others; but we have been told by Jesus himself to show respect and kindness to everyone, whether within the Church or beyond it.

The month of August this year will be well spent if at *Sang Marie* and *Tobaski* we renew our commitment as Gambians to live together in peace and harmony, working for the common good and national progress. Our national anthem puts this well: 'Keep us, great God of nations, to The Gambia ever true.'

And the whole nation will surely benefit if those who put God's will first show the warmth, compassion and commitment that are Mary's great example.

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Editor *Fr Peter S. Lopez* Editorial Consultant *David Somers*

Layout *Betty Quacoo*

Production *Henry Gomez, Frédéric Diatta*



# Here & there

NEWS FROM AROUND THE DIOCESE

## Young people gather for the Youth Cross celebration



THIS YEAR'S National Youth Cross celebration from 22nd to 24th June – the biggest youth event in the Diocese of Banjul - attracted enthusiastic young people from every parish in the diocese, together with Anglicans, Methodists and evangelical Christians.

Among the many taking part were 60 young Senegalese people from the Archdiocese of Dakar and the dioceses of Kaolack and Kolda, accompanied by three priests and a religious sister.

The three-day programme was organised by the Catholic Diocesan Youth Committee (CDYC).

The theme for the celebration was 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God (Luke 1:30), which will be the theme at next year's World Youth Cross celebration in Panama, Central America.

The programme began on Friday with a procession from St Therese's Church, Kanifing, to St Charles Lower and Upper Basic School in Fajikunda, followed by Eucharistic Adoration.

Day Two began with a Mass at St Charles Lwanga Church at 7.30am, followed by a talk by Fr Bruno Toupan and Fr Peter Lopez. In the evening there was another procession: this time from St Charles' School to the gates of St Peter's School in Lamin.

That evening's Gospel concert included the presentation of certificates to the winners of last year's 'Voice of the Youth', this year's 'Youth Night of Glory', and the winners of the Therese Ayo Memorial Football Tournament.

Day three - Sunday 24th June - began with the celebration of a Thanksgiving Mass at 10 am by Bishop Gabriel Mandy, assisted by nine priests, including the three priests from Senegal.

### Next year, Soma

At the end of the Mass the bishop announced that the parish of Mary Mother of God, Soma, will host next year's Youth Cross celebrations.

A vote of thanks was proposed by the Chair of the Youth Cross celebration, Gladys Bojang.

## Presentation Girls Vocational School salutes departing students

ON Friday 6th July the Presentation Girl's Vocational School in Banjul held its 13th annual ceremony to mark the completion by 56 students of three years' training in the school's departments of home management, commerce and hair-dressing.

The ceremony, which included the award of certificates and prizes to outstanding students and teachers, was attended by the Deputy Mayor of Banjul, parents and relatives of those graduating, teachers, and past and present students.

The opening prayer was offered by Fr Peter Lopez.

The guest speaker was Musukuta Coma, Country Director of Child Fund International.

In her report, the Principal, Sr Rosine Sanyang (*right*), spoke of students' attainments and the acquisition of new sewing machines and computers.

Among difficulties the school is facing, she said, is the need to protect the premises from flooding during the rainy season.

She pointed out that some students have been forced into part-time jobs in order to pay school fees, and stressed the need for grants for school leavers to start their own businesses using skills they have learnt at school.

The Presentation Girls Vocational School is owned and administered by the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary. It was opened in 1972 by Sr Cecilia Lanovaz, and is one of the oldest vocational schools in the country.



## Peter's Pence

ON Sunday 28th July, Catholic parishes throughout the world took part in the Pope's charity campaign - the Peter's Pence collection, which distributes aid to those most in need.

Peter's Pence - in Latin, *Denarii Sancti Petri* - was first mentioned in 1031 to refer to a contribution sent to the Pope in Rome.

Since approval by Pope Pius IX in 1871, Peter's Pence refers to the special collection in Rome on the Sunday closest to 29th June, the Solemnity of St Peter and St Paul, the city's patrons. The proceeds are given to the Pope to use at his discretion for charities.

Peter's Pence receives contributions from institutes, societies and individuals.

Peter's Pence helps regions affected by natural disasters and people afflicted by violence.

In sub-Saharan Africa, Peter's Pence supports development through the John Paul II Foundation for the Sahel.

### PRAY WITH THE WHOLE CHURCH EVERY DAY!

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and you will find the full texts  
- and daily Mass



## Could church ruins in Albreda become a tourist attraction?

By George Gomez



ON Saturday 2nd June a six-man team consisting of Fr Peter Lopez, Anthony Njie, Philip Saine, Dominic Mendy, Lamin Cham (Editor of the *Standard* newspaper) and myself visited Juffereh to talk to the elders in the neighbouring villages. We crossed in two vehicles on the 10.30 am ferry, and after a brief stop in Essau to present KitAid football jerseys, balls and boots to Berending and Essau upper basic schools, continued to Albreda, 30 kilometres away, on a bad laterite road.

Present at a well-attended meeting in the Tourism Museum were the alkalis of Albreda and Juffereh and the Resident Officer of the National Council of Arts and Culture, along with women's and youth groups, and the male and female football teams of Albreda and San Domingo.

The visitors pointed out that the derelict church in Albreda could be promoted as a religious tourist destination, helping to develop the area and provide much-needed employment for young people.

Both alkalis spoke of their concern to develop their villages. They thanked the team and promised to work with them to realise the venture to turn the church into a tourist attraction. Other speakers expressed similar views.

The group was taken on a tour of the derelict buildings in San Domingo and the ruined church in Albreda before departing on the 5.30 pm ferry.

### 'Search for a Shrine' Committee

In 1985, when I was Chairman of The Gambia Search for a Shrine Committee we visited Albreda and San Domingo on the recommendation of Fr Michael Casey, who was then Parish Priest on the North Bank.

In Albreda we found the remains of the small church said to have been built by Portuguese explorers in the 15th or 16th century; and in San Domingo we saw derelict buildings said to have been the house and bakery of the Portuguese missionaries. We were shown a spot where someone called the 'King of the Priests' was buried.

Since that day in 1985 I have had sleepless nights asking why the site wasn't claimed by the Church for restoration. According to oral history, when Portuguese explorers in the 15th century visited what was then pagan Gambia they stayed at James Island. Their First Officer died from fever - which may have been malaria. He had to be buried on the island, but there was no priest to conduct Christian burial rites. The Portuguese promised to bring a missionary priest when

they next visited. They renamed the island St Andrew's Island, in remembrance of the First Officer. Four years later, three priests arrived. It is believed that they settled in Dan Domingo and built the church in Albreda.

The remains of the church are definitely pre-Victorian. The place for the tabernacle can still be identified, confirming that the building was a church. This would therefore be the first church in Sub-Saharan Africa.

If the history and remains in the area could be promoted, it could become a popular tourist heritage destination.

### The Diocesan Prayer



GOD our Father, renew by the light of the Gospel the Church in the Diocese of Banjul.

Strengthen the bonds of unity between the faithful, the religious, the priests and the Bishop, so that together your chosen people may shine forth as a sign of unity and peace in a world torn by discord and strife.

Bless and sustain all our efforts to establish a dynamic, self-reliant Church.

Open our eyes and our hearts to the needs of all, and especially of our own brothers and sisters in Christ who are less fortunate than others, so that in a spirit of solidarity and compassion we may faithfully proclaim the good news of salvation and advance together on the way to your Kingdom.

Grant this through Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. *Amen*



## Congratulations

On Sunday 5th August  
Fr Magashi Aernan Terungwa Samuel CSSp  
celebrates the first anniversary of his Ordination

### Congratulations

and  
Prayerful Best Wishes  
to

**The Right Reverend Michael Cleary CSSp**  
*Bishop Emeritus of Banjul*

on the occasion of his 93rd Birthday  
Saturday 1st September 2018

## OBITUARY

### The passing of 'Pa Mel'

THE DEATH occurred on Wednesday 6th June, aged 84, of a staunch Catholic, James Melbury Pierre Jatta, popularly known as 'Pa Mel', whose sociability was evidenced by his referring to everyone as 'Ku Bah Ki'.

Mr Jatta was born in Banjul on 31st March 1933, the second of the five children of Pierre and Agnes Mama Jatta. He attended St John's Primary School and St Augustine's High School, where he was a passionate footballer. He went on to work for many years at the Ministry of Agriculture before going in the 1970s to the School of Agriculture at Njala University College, Freetown.

On his return, Mr Jatta worked as an agricultural extension officer for many years, serving in such provincial outstations as Jenoi and Sapu.

On retirement, he was employed by Shyben Madi, and later became a clearing agent with Kenbugul Njie, Pa Jarley and others.

Pa Mel was a member of the Council of Elders and of the Cathedral Men's Solidarity. His lifetime Catholicism enabled him to bear old age with grace.

Mr Jatta's Requiem Mass was celebrated at the Cathedral on Monday 18th June, followed by interment at Banjul Cemetery.

### Keen Brikama Catholic

THE DEATH occurred in Brikama on Friday 15th June of 'Captain' - Vincent Aki John, an ardent Catholic.

Vincent was born in 1943 in Pambal, Senegal. In the mid 1970s he settled in Brikama and began work as a craftsman. He and his wife, the late Nicole Tine John, raised three sons and five daughters.

He was a keen Catholic who sang tenor in the church choir, and was a member of the Vincent de Paul group and the graveyard committee. He was on good terms with the parish priests at Brikama, from Fr James White to Fr James Mendy (the present Parish Priest).

Vincent was known for his conviviality, which earned him the nickname, 'Captain'. His Requiem Mass held at the Church of the Resurrection, Brikama, on Monday 18th June, prior to interment at Santa-Su Cemetery.

### Dutch philanthropist

PRAYERS were said at St Therese's Church Kanifing prior to the burial of Simon Wezel, a Dutchman who lived locally, and who in 1995 founded the NGO, Kingfisher Trust.

Mr Wezel was born in 1934. Following a first visit in 1984 as a tourist he returned annually until settling here in 1996. Having engaged in supporting Gambian individuals, Mr Wezel became familiar with the Europe Development Fund (EDF) and VISA (Village Initiative Support Activities) and in 1994 established the Kingfisher Trust, which supports skill centres, clubs, schools and various groups. In December 1994 he was commended by the President's Office for the good work rendered by the Trust.

### Youth encounter with Jesus

AS this Newsletter went to press, a week-long programme was being held from at GPI from Monday 23rd to Friday 27th July.

The programme was organised in conjunction with the Catholic Renewal Ministry in the United States. The local co-ordinator is Emmanuel Tamakloe, who is based in his home country, Ghana.

He first worked with Renewal Ministries in 1999. He currently works full time with the National Office of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal of Ghana as co-ordinator for missions, formation, and praise and worship ministries.

The Renewal Ministry promotes 'vibrant worship...an atmosphere where God is lifted up through heart-felt songs of praise while we are opened to his presence in Spirit-led worship'. It speaks of 'relevant Scripture... an emphasis on the Word of God that comes alive in inspirational messages, applicable to real life.'

Renewal Ministry aims at building community and helping to develop Catholic Christian maturity in discipleship and ministry. Renewal Ministry is committed to unity with the Roman Catholic Church in the context of the existing parish and diocesan structure. It declares:

'We bear witness to the love of Jesus Christ that is renewed through the baptism of His Holy Spirit, which empowers His Kingdom of righteousness, peace and joy to be built up within the Catholic Church. Our purpose is to grow in holiness through an intimate relationship with Jesus through prayer, to fan into flame the grace of Pentecost and to foster openness to the work of the Holy Spirit among God's people. We sponsor Life in The Spirit Seminars, Conferences, Days of Praise and Worship and help develop small, intimate prayer groups.'

### An occasion for celebration

JUST a week after *Sang Marie* - or around Wednesday 22nd August - Muslims world-wide will celebrate *Eid-al-Adha*. In The Gambia and Senegal the feast is known as *Tobaski*, and since The Gambia and Senegal are largely Muslim countries, the celebration is public, popular and nation-wide.

Christians can feel particularly close to Muslims at *Tobaski*, because what it celebrates is Abraham's faith in God, and his willingness to sacrifice his own son if that was God's will - as narrated in the Qur'an and the earlier account in Genesis.

Abraham is indeed 'father in faith' to Jews, Christians and Muslims. Christians honour Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Elisha and all the Old Testament patriarchs and prophets who pointed the way to God.

The petitions in the Litany of the Saints include, *Omnes sancti Patriarchae et Prophetae, orate pro nobis* - 'All holy Patriarchs and Prophets, pray for us.'

Christ's Mother proclaimed: 'My soul magnifies the Lord... He has helped his servant Israel in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promises he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and his descendants for ever.' (*Magnificat*, the Song of Mary, Luke 1:46-55)

The witness of Abraham and his successors is proclaimed in the New Testament Letter to the Hebrews, chapter 11: 4-38.



# Local and worldwide rejoicing

SOME might say that in The Gambia we don't need to be reminded about *Sang Marie*. Banjul used to be known as St Mary's Island, and the title Kombo St Mary is still in use. Moreover, our Cathedral and the Diocese of Banjul are dedicated to Mary, under her title, Our Lady of the Assumption. The Anglican Cathedral is also dedicated to Mary.

*Sang Marie* became a public holiday in The Gambia in 1958. It was dropped as a holiday in 1976, but reinstated the following year.

Referring to the Qu'ran, Muslims hold Mary, virgin Mother of Jesus, in great respect, so that *Sang Marie* is a happy holiday for all Gambians.

## How did this great and worldwide celebration come about?

The Catholic doctrine of the Assumption that at the end of her earthly life, Mary the Mother of Jesus was taken body and soul into glory, to be with her Son for ever.

Mary was assumed into heaven because her soul had not been tainted with original sin.

Catholics celebrate the Assumption each year on 15th August. Orthodox Christians follow the old Julian calendar, and mark the Assumption on 28th August as the 'Dormition (or Falling-Asleep) of the Theotokos, the Most Holy Mother of God'.

The Assumption is an ancient belief, first found in the 5th century. It remains controversial among some Protestants, because it is not explicitly referred to in the Bible. But a report in 2003 by Anglican and Roman Catholic theologians found common ground (but not common authority) for belief in the Assumption: '...We can affirm together that God has taken the Blessed Virgin Mary in the fullness of her person into his glory as consistent with Scripture and that it can, indeed, only be understood in the light of Scripture.'

## Proclamation



The doctrine of the Assumption was formally proclaimed as infallible by Pope Pius XII (*left*) on All Saints Day 1958:

'We proclaim, declare and define it to be a divinely-revealed dogma that the Immaculate Mother of God, the ever-Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory.'

The proclamation made the Assumption an article of faith for all Catholics. It was only the second time that a Pope had proclaimed a doctrine to be infallible. The first was the Immaculate Conception (by Pope Pius IX in 1854) of another doctrine that concerns Mary.



## Universal consensus

Pope Pius XII justified the proclamation of the doctrine largely on

- the 'universal consensus of the Church'
- the theological 'suitability' of the doctrine.

'The universal consensus of the Church' means that what the Church as a whole teaches and believes must be treated as a revealed and thus indisputable truth. The Church can only reach such a consensus through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit cannot be wrong.

This does not mean that Church doctrine cannot evolve; theologians use the idea of dogmatic progression, by which human ideas, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, develop towards the real truth. Once the real truth is established, the 'universal consensus' of the Church then confirms it an eternal truth.

Before proclaiming the doctrine, Pius XII made sure that there really was a consensus in the Church.

In 1946 he wrote to all the bishops to ask whether they thought the Assumption should become official Catholic doctrine, and whether the priests and the laity agreed with them.

Ninety-nine per cent of the bishops said yes.

## Reinforcing faith

The other main argument for the Assumption was that it fitted well with other Catholic teaching, and would reinforce believers' faith that they too would eventually go to heaven.

The Assumption was also clearly in harmony with other Catholic ideas about Mary:

- her Immaculate Conception
- her perpetual virginity
- as 'God-bearer' - Mother of God



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# CHILDREN'S PAGE

A picture for you to colour



Mary the Mother of Jesus is our Mother, too.



## family circle

### Stress

STRESS is very common. It can be caused by anything that makes us angry, frustrated or unhappy.

- 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.

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.

### Be honest with yourself

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 that 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?







### This rainy season, plant a tree!

TREES are the most prominent living feature of any natural setting apart from the polar regions. They are the backbone of life as we know it.

Trees conserve water. They control pollution. They protect the very earth itself. Trees are oxygen banks, air cleaners, rain-bringers and erosion-preventers. And they are beautiful.

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

Trees supply us indirectly with so much that sustains human life; yet for generations we have cut them down without replacement, without a thought for the future.

Already, entire regions have been denuded of their natural forests. The resultant atmospheric pollution of carbon dioxide (which trees would have converted into life-giving oxygen) is causing scientists, planners and politicians great concern.

The Church is also increasingly concerned, for she regards mankind as stewards of God's creation. By continuing to despoil the natural environment, we are causing changes to the world climate which could ultimately lead to the end of the habitat on which human life depends.

### How much water do we need?

AT this time of year in particular, everyone needs to drink more water.

Water is essential for the body's growth and maintenance. It helps get rid of waste, regulates temperature, and provides a medium for biological reactions in the body.

The body gets its fluid from three sources: William L. Patenaude

- Drinks: either plain water or as part of other beverages such as tea, coffee and soft drinks.
- Solid foods, especially fruit and vegetables (even foods such as bread provide small amounts of fluid).
- Chemical reactions within the body.

Most healthy adults need between one-and-a-half to three litres of water a day. Aim to drink between six to eight medium glasses of fluid daily. You need more fluid during hot weather and if you're physically active.

You can see whether you're drinking enough by the colour of your urine. If it's a pale straw colour, your intake is probably fine. If your urine is dark yellow, you need to take more.

75 per cent of your brain and 25 per cent of your bones are made up of water.

A human being can go without food for a month, but can go without water for only a week.

- Once you drink water, it leaves your stomach in about five minutes.

## The child, the parent, and the school

NOT a day passes without a good mother or father thinking of the welfare and happiness of the children in their care. A child's adult future - work, marriage, and moral and spiritual fulfilment - depends very much on a secure, loving and orderly home life from the child's earliest years.

During August our children are at home during their long school holiday. It's quite a strain for some parents, keeping children busy, safe and useful. But in September a new school year begins. It's not a time when parents should say, 'Thank goodness the children are off our hands, and we can entrust them to the school again.' Education is an ongoing, active partnership between schools and parents.

The government commendably continues to expand formal schooling opportunities at all levels - primary, secondary and tertiary. What a contrast to most of the colonial era, when education was largely left to Christian missions!

The Catholic and other churches in The Gambia, and Muslim missions, too, continue to support the nation through their educational provision.

But schools flourish only to the extent that their pupils are properly cared for at home. Children and schools need the positive support of parents. This means more than paying fees and getting children to school regularly. It means that parents should daily interest themselves in their children's school work, and liaise with schools if queries or problems arise. It means that the daily routine of the family should invariably be based on the children's welfare and interests. The well-run family home is the well-spring of love and trust, mutual care and good living

For Catholic parents, an essential element of family solidarity should be prayer. Parents cannot go to school with their children, but on Sundays they should go to Mass, with their children, as a family.

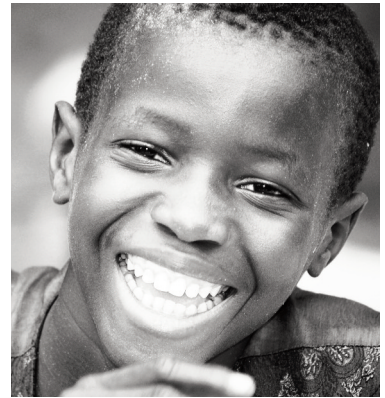
'The family that prays together, stays together' may be a cliché, but it points to a prime component of Christian family life. Home prayers, every day, however short and simple, are of tremendous help in sustaining the faith of every member of the family.

Parents who feel self-conscious about praying with their children at home should ask themselves if they are doing their best for their children, and for themselves.

### No nobler activity

There is no nobler human activity than the faithful bringing up of children. No parent, however busy, should neglect this duty, which is of paramount importance for the child, the family and the nation.

If we profess the Christian faith and wish to practise it, let us ask the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph to be our inspiration and our guide.



***Ego sum panis vitae****I am the bread of life* John 6:48

# Sunday Reflections

Reflections, readings and prayers for Mass on all the Sundays  
in August & September and for *Sang Marie***5th August  
18th Sunday in  
Ordinary Time*****Bread from heaven***

THIS year's Sunday Gospel readings are taken from St Mark, except for the five Sundays from 29th July to 2nd September, when we hear passages from St John's Gospel concerning the Eucharist.

We are pointed towards today's Gospel reading by a passage from Exodus. In response to the Israelites' complaints to Moses that they were suffering hunger in

the desert, the Lord God provided 'manna'.

This manna, mysterious 'food from heaven', has never been forgotten by the Jews. Thus, in the time of Jesus, the crowd asked him if he, just like Moses, could provide bread from heaven.

When Jesus declared that the Father did indeed supply such bread, the people cried, 'Give us this bread always!' In reply, Our Lord told them, simply: 'I am the bread of life. He who comes to me shall never hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst.'

Jesus sometimes bewildered some of his hearers and offended others. To us, too, his words are a challenge. If we do indeed accept Jesus as the bread of life, let us take to heart the advice of St Paul in today's second reading, and 'put on the new self...in the goodness and holiness of the truth.'

**Collect**

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

**Readings:** Exodus 16:2-4,12-15. Psalm 77:3-4,23-25,54.

**Response:** The Lord gave them bread from heaven. Ephesians 4: 17, 20-24.

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

**Gospel:** John 6: 24-35

**Prayer over the gifts**

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

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

**Prayer after Communion**

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

**12th August  
19th Sunday in  
Ordinary Time*****An unacceptable claim?***

IN despair, the prophet Elijah, exhausted by his enemies, told God that he wanted to die. But in response, the merciful Lord provided him with food, strength and encouragement.

Today's Gospel reading follows what we heard last Sunday: that Jesus is the 'bread from heaven'. We shouldn't be surprised that many Jews found much of Jesus' teaching unpalatable. Jewish dietary rules did not allow them to conceive of eating Jesus' 'flesh for the life of the world'. How could this man, son of a carpenter, make such an outrageous claim?

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

**Collect**

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

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

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

**Gospel:** John 6:41-51

**Prayer over the Offerings**

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

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





**Prayer after Communion**

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

*Tuesday evening*  
**14th August**  
**Vigil of the**  
**Assumption of the**  
**Blessed Virgin**  
**Mary**

*See page 7*

**Collect**

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

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

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

**Gospel:** Luke 11:27-28

**Prayer over the Offerings**

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

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

**Prayer after Communion**

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

*Wednesday 15th August*  
**The Assumption of the**  
**Blessed Virgin Mary**

**Collect**

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

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

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

**Gospel:** Luke 1:39-56

**Prayer over the Offerings**

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

**Preface:** ...For today the Virgin Mother of God was assumed into heaven as the beginning and image of your Church's coming to perfection and a sign of sure hope and comfort to your pilgrim people; rightly you would not allow her to see the corruption of the tomb, since from her own body she marvellously brought forth your incarnate Son, the Author of all life...

**Prayer after Communion**

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

*19th August*  
**20th Sunday in**  
**Ordinary Time**

**Solemn truth**

THE PASSAGE from Proverbs which is the first of today's readings is familiar as a hymn we often sing at Mass: 'Come, eat of my bread, and drink of my wine...'

Today's Gospel opens with Jesus' words at the end of last Sunday's Gospel. His Jewish listeners murmured against him, 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?'

The same question may well be put to us today by those who don't understand what the Church knows and teaches about the Eucharist. How can bread and wine become Christ's Body and Blood?

When we try to explain this teaching to our Protestant and Muslim friends, what matters most is that we speak from the heart and from experience - from true, personal knowledge of Our Lord, in particular in the Sacrament of the Altar.

May our faith and thankfulness be apparent to all, especially to those who are seeking to know Christ more intimately, as the true Bread from Heaven.

**Collect**

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

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

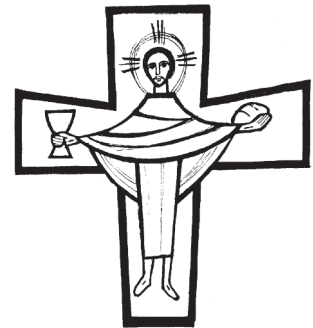
**Gospel acclamation:** He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me, and I in him.

**Gospel:** John 6: 51-58

**Prayer over the Offerings**

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

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



**Prayer after Communion**

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

26th August

**21st Sunday in Ordinary Time****Message of eternal life**

TODAY'S short passage from Joshua is a dramatic reminder of the Jewish people's proud assertion that they had rejected the worship of foreign gods and committed themselves to the Lord God who had freed them from slavery in Egypt.

In the Gospel, did Jesus' followers commit themselves unreservedly to him? Some did – in particular, Peter and the apostles: 'You have the message of eternal life, and we believe; we know that you are the Holy One of God.'

But others among Jesus' followers turned away: some in sadness, some in scorn, some in bewilderment, some not knowing what to think. Jesus' teaching about himself was uncompromising. It demanded a personal response: you could either accept, or say 'no'.

From the time of Jesus, many have hesitated to follow the One who asks for faith and commitment. Joshua asked his people to make up their minds about where their allegiance lay; and Jesus asks, 'Do you want to leave me, too?'

Look at today's Collect, immediately below; can we offer it to God our Father and Jesus our Lord in all sincerity and strength of purpose?

**Collect**

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

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

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

**Gospel:** John 6: 60-69

**Prayer over the Offerings**

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

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

**Prayer after Communion**

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

**2nd September  
22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time****The man within**

AFTER the past six Sundays - hearing Jesus' teaching in St John's Gospel about the 'bread of life' - we return for the remaining Sundays in Ordinary Time to the Gospel of St Mark.

Some people are attached to a religion because of its rituals. The careful, self-conscious observance of ritual gives them a comforting sense of belonging to an elite: the select few who are 'saved'. At the time of Jesus, many Jews (especially the Pharisees) derived satisfaction from their meticulous observance of many rules and customs – and insisted that all others should observe them, too.

The first five books of the Bible, known to the Jews as the *Torah* (the Law) are the basis of Jewish religious practices.

Jesus taught that the Law is paramount. Indeed, he had come, he said, to fulfil the Law. But he also made plain that fussiness and intolerance over man-made details are of little value if heartfelt faith is lacking.

We may know a lot about Church matters – which saint is being commemorated today, how to conduct ourselves in a pious manner at each moment of the Mass, etc. Such observances have their place and their value. But the Church is not an exclusive club with mysterious, 'insider' rules. At the heart of the Church is Christ, who has taught us, quoting from the Law given in Deuteronomy, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and you shall love your neighbour as yourself' (Deuteronomy ??? ; Mark 12:30).

Some Jews considered that their distinctive manner of worship set them apart and above all others. They were scornful and dismissive of outsiders. Yet Jesus told an outsider, a Canaanite woman who asked for his help: 'Woman, you have great faith. Let your wish be granted.'

*For practical advice on following Christ, read the Letter of St James, extracts from which form the second reading at every Sunday Mass this month. See page 17.*

**Collect**

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

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

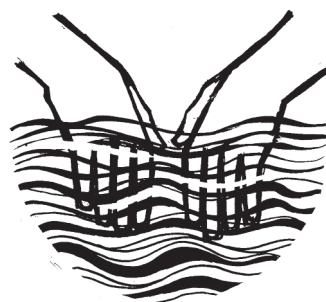
**Gospel acclamation:** Alleluia...Your words are spirit, Lord, and they are life: you have the message of eternal life.

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

**Prayer over the Offerings**

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

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





**Prayer after Communion**

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

## 9th September 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

**He sets us free**

LIFE can be hard. Through personal experience and media reports we know that misfortune and suffering are everywhere. We turn to our faith for hope and courage.

The prophecy of Isaiah derives from a period of great suffering among the Jewish people – yet it abounds with hope. ‘Say to all faint hearts, “Courage! ... the eyes of the blind shall be opened, the ears of the deaf unsealed... the tongue of the dumb sing for joy...”’

Today’s Gospel tells how Jesus healed a man with a speech impediment. He didn’t perform such healing with a view to publicity, but people’s admiration was ‘unbounded’: ‘He has done all things well.’

Come what may, in good times and bad, Jesus is our joy, our hope and healer. He sets us free.

*See the illustration of today’s Gospel on the back page.*

**Collect**

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

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

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

**Gospel:** Mark 7:31-37

**Prayer over the Offerings**

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

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

**Prayer after Communion**

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

Blessed be Jesus  
in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar



## 16th September 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time

**The heart of the faith**

THE PROPHECIES attributed to Isaiah were written in an age very different from our own. Yet they contain much to inspire us.

We interpret the Old Testament in the light of the Christian faith, and when Isaiah speaks of the ‘suffering servant’ we see Jesus as one who did not flinch from suffering - suffering on behalf of all mankind.

In today’s Gospel we’re told that Jesus asked his disciples, ‘Who do people say that I am?’ They gave various answers. Peter replied outright: ‘You are the Christ’: in other words, Jesus was God’s Anointed, the Messiah.

Peter’s answer is the reason that Mark wrote his Gospel. The very first words of Mark’s Gospel are, ‘The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.’

Jesus went on to tell the disciples that he was to suffer death, then to rise from the dead. Peter had been granted the wondrous insight that Jesus was the Christ, but he could not understand that his beloved Master should have to suffer. Rather shockingly, Jesus immediately rebuked Peter, saying, ‘Get behind me, Satan!’

Jesus told his followers that they must follow the path of sacrifice and suffering. Any religion that does not face up to sin and suffering cannot address our frail and uncertain human condition. Jesus, true God and true man, has made our humanity his own, and through his cross and resurrection has opened the way for us to eternal fulfilment and joy.

For two thousand years all sorts of opinions have been held about Jesus - many of them highly favourable. But unless we believe, like Peter and the Church, that Jesus is God incarnate - the Christ - we cannot truly claim the name ‘Christian’. A Christian is one who looks to Christ alone for salvation. And Jesus says: ‘Anyone who wants to be a follower of mine must renounce himself, take up his cross and follow me.’

**Collect**

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

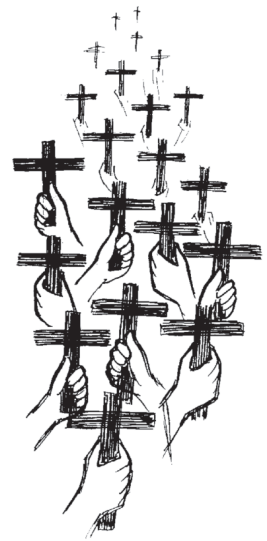
**Readings:** Isaiah 50: 5-9. Psalm 114:1-6,8-9. Response: I will walk in the presence of the Lord, in the land of the living. James 2: 14-18.

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

**Gospel:** Mark 8:27-35

**Prayer over the Offerings**

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



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

**Prayer after Communion**

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

**23rd September  
25th Sunday in  
Ordinary Time**

**Simple belief, true service**

OUR first reading today comes from Wisdom, and reminds us that the good man must expect hostility. But today's responsorial psalm asserts, 'I have God for my help. The Lord upholds my life.' The joy of knowing Jesus springs from knowing that on our behalf he has overcome sin and suffering.



When Jesus told his disciples that he was to suffer death at the hands of sinful men, they dared not ask him what he meant. Instead they argued about which of them was the greatest.

It was hard for the disciples to understand and accept that the kingdom of God is founded on service to others. Jesus came among us as 'one who serves' - even to dying for our salvation. That perfect sacrifice demands our own thankful service. Whether in the small daily routines of life or at times of doubt, danger and challenge, we need to ask, 'Am I seeking my own advantage here, or seeking to serve God?'

Jesus tells us that to be truly the greatest, must put others first, with the simple faith of a child.

**Collect**

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

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

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

**Gospel:** Mark 9:30-37

**Prayer over the Offerings**

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

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

**Prayer after Communion**

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

**30th September  
26th Sunday in  
Ordinary Time**

**Condemnation**

MANY who enjoy social status want to keep it to themselves, or even to flaunt their supposed superiority to those beneath them. Not so, Moses. He was the leader of his people, and their great prophet, but he wanted everyone to share what God had given him.



James, in today's extract from his letter, puts it somewhat differently. Echoing the condemnation of the rich and arrogant, which is so frequent in the Old Testament, James condemned the exploitation of the poor, saying that the sins of the rich would cause their flesh to be eaten like fire.

Like Moses, Jesus said that anyone who did good was, as it were, 'on his side'. Then he said something that may disturb us. Like James, he spoke of 'fire'. We should expunge the evil within us: 'If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off.'

It's unfashionable today, even in the Church, to talk about hell - or even to think about it. It's widely assumed that so great is God's mercy that we shall all be forgiven our sins, even if we haven't acknowledged them and sought forgiveness.

Yet to Jesus, hell is as real as heaven. Like him, should we not take the reality of heaven and hell seriously?

**Collect**

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

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

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

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

**Prayer over the Offerings**

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

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

**Prayer after Communion**

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

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



# 'Draw near to God and he will draw near to you'

The most practical of all the New Testament letters

THE Letter of St James is often remembered for what James says about the tongue:

- 'If any think they are religious and do not bridle their tongue but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless.' James 1:26)

- '...no one can tame the tongue – a restless evil, full of poison. With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God.' (James 3:8-9)

James' Letter is not as well known as those of St Paul, St Peter and St John. But on the five Sundays in September the Second Reading at Mass is taken from James, so we a chance to think more about what he has to say.

Since the entire letter consists of only five chapters, we can read it easily at home.

The Letter of James has been described as the most practical of all the letters in the New Testament in terms of how we should live our Christian faith:

'Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.' (James 1:27)

Marked contrast James' Letter is in marked contrast to other New Testament letters – those of Paul, Peter and John. James makes only two references to 'the Lord Jesus' (James 1:1 and 2:1), and does not refer to such central Christian doctrines as the incarnation, resurrection and ascension or the atonement of Jesus.

Yet the letter contains numerous Christian elements. It refers to 'elders of the church (James 5:14), the rebirth of the believer (James 1:18), and a reference to Jesus' resurrection and ascension as 'the Lord of glory' (James 2:1).

James often quotes or echoes words of Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount and elsewhere in the Gospels. In fact, the short Letter of James has been shown to preserve more words of Jesus than all the rest of the New Testament letters combined.

## Who wrote the letter?

Who wrote the letter? The author identifies himself simply as 'James, a servant [or slave] of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ'.

Of the several New Testament characters called James, the most likely author of the letter is James, 'the Lord's brother' (Galatians 1:19), who was the leader of the church in Jerusalem (Acts 15:13 and 21:18). As a well-known figure in the church, James needed no further introduction.

James was martyred in Jerusalem in AD 62, so the letter must have been written before then.

Many scholars have suggested an earlier date, perhaps between AD 40 and 50, which would make it the earliest of all



the New Testament writings.

The letter is addressed to 'the twelve tribes who are scattered abroad' (James 1:1).

## 'Extremely practical'

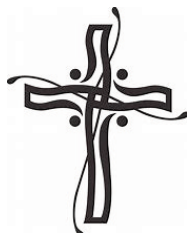
The letter of James extremely practical in its focus. James treats such subjects as perseverance under testing, obedience to God's word, the evils of the uncontrolled tongue, the sin of partiality, and the need for patience and humility.

For James, religion is nothing if it is not accompanied by practical action. 'If a brother or sister is destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things that are needed for the body, what does it profit?' (James 2:15-16).

## James and Paul in conflict?

In James' emphasis on good works, some have seen a conflict between him and Paul, especially in Paul's letter to the Galatians and the Romans. But verse for verse, James speaks of faith no less than any other New Testament letter; and Paul's letter to Titus has more frequent references to works than James. When Paul says that no man is justified by works (Romans 3:38, Galatians 2:16), and James seems to say the opposite (James 2:21-24), the two use the idea of justification differently.

Paul is talking about the initial achievement of perfection, the 'righteousness of Christ (1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21); whereas James, in a more Jewish way, is speaking of the growth of personal holiness which must accompany a life motivated by true faith.



Let us seek to follow  
Christ as faithfully  
as St James

# Catholic funerals from the perspective of faith

by WILLIAM L. PATENAUDE

YOU'RE probably witnessing liturgical abuses when the woman in the pew behind you asks out loud, 'What on earth is he doing?'

This happened at a funeral. A visiting celebrant at a parish that I do not belong to left the sanctuary before we prayed the Our Father. He repositioned people in the front few pews and led the prayer while holding the hands of various family members and pall bearers, even though the coffin was in the way. This followed and preceded other changes to the liturgy that brought too much attention to the celebrant, confused the family, frustrated the servers, and had the rest of us wondering what would happen next.

Funeral liturgies should be what they are intended to be: powerful moments of transcendence that point us to questions that only faith in Jesus Christ can answer - questions about death and life, sin and salvation, humanity and God. The faithful, the lapsed, and the uninitiated should experience in ways proper to each the promises and mysteries of revelation.

'The Catechism of the Catholic Church' teaches that 'the death of a member of the community is an event that should lead beyond the perspectives of this world and should draw the faithful into the true perspective of faith in the risen Christ (1687).

This leading us beyond is a means of catechesis and evangelisation. But when funerals become events of liturgical showmanship or poor (if not heretical) catechesis - or when they centre on the sentiments of the survivors rather than the salvation of the deceased - the Church cannot teach as she ought. Nor can she evangelise as she must.

## A funeral, or instant sainthood?

Of the Catholic funerals I've attended, many have contained one or two (or more) emphatic statements that the deceased (along with all family members that have gone before them) are most certainly with God in heaven. If it were not for the proclamation of Scripture or the prayers of the liturgy, one might never hear the words 'hope' or 'mercy'.

When hope that the deceased will enter into heavenly glory is conveyed as certainty, the funeral Mass becomes just another therapeutic moment of letting go rather than a Eucharistic offering to God, who does not wish us to let go but remain in communion with him and the deceased. After all, everyone who dies needs our prayers.

There are understandable pastoral temptations to suggest instant sainthood - especially if the preacher knew the deceased well. But putting to one side the Church's lengthy investigations of the miraculous, we aren't privy to a person's particular judgment. This implies a more pressing pastoral need to preach the truth.



## A widow's uncertainty

A woman I've known since childhood (I'll call her 'Martha') lost her husband after years of illness. A few weeks after the funeral, Martha cried as she struggled to say, 'I don't know where my husband is anymore.'

During the days before and after the funeral, friends and family stressed with certainty that her husband was in heaven with God. But if she really believed it, why was she so uncertain when we spoke?

Martha had not practised her faith for years. But she knew her husband better than anyone - even her children. During our conversation it became clear that she had honestly evaluated his life and wasn't so sure about his place in heaven. And so she wondered, what other option was there?

Fortunately, the funeral celebrant hadn't made promises that he couldn't be sure of. His homily stressed the need to pray for the deceased. He spoke of the paschal mystery, the forgiveness of sins, and God's desire for justice and mercy. He preached about purgatory because he knew he was preaching to the lapsed - to a family that needed to hear this good and realistic news.

Martha's grief would not be easily consoled, but at least the disposition of her husband's soul - her not knowing where he is - didn't force a choice between the improbable perfect and the potentially unthinkable. Now having access to knowledge of purgatory, truth slowly comforted her anguish.

Funeral homilies that promise sainthood over the more likely need for purgatory may discourage the living from praying for the dead. They also force the poorly-catechised and the uninitiated to choose between what little they know of heaven and what they fear most about hell. And often, no matter how many times a loved one hears that the deceased is in heaven, it is understandable if they spend the rest of their lives secretly wondering otherwise.

On the other extreme, should the faithful and the lapsed (who may only attend Mass at funerals) hear over and again that everyone goes to heaven, why wouldn't they think that



the same applies to them and those they love, like their spouses and children?

Preaching instant sainthood thus comes with terrible consequences: it either sows unrealistic certainty or despair among survivors, or it falsely assures us that no one really has 'sinned and are deprived of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23). And if that is the case, what need is there for prayers for the dead, the grace of God, and the Church that offers it sacramentally?

#### **Do we all become angels?**

Then there is the expectation that when we die we become angels. No matter what is revealed in the Gospel or spoken in the Eucharistic prayers, the poorly-catechised often add pleasant but gnostic imagery of souls becoming not like angels, but actual angels - beings who are and who will remain pure spirit and intellect and have no need of physical bodies.

Thus what we know about being human - of having a body and a soul - contrasts with the expectation that our eternal rest will include only half of who we are, or were. And that comes with uncomfortable implications. If by the grace of God we do meet our loved ones after our death, such a gnostic version of heaven offers no hope of ever hugging them again or enjoying the goodness of creation's physicality.

I know from the death of my long paralysed, bed-ridden aunt that there is comfort in knowing that one's broken body is no longer a cause of suffering. Thus we speak of 'being released' from our fallen bodily existence. But this does not imply that this separation is a good and intended end for all eternity. No wonder so many Catholics - even among the practising - are forgetting our promised rise in eternal, bodily glory.

Those attending a Catholic funeral who do not know the treasures of Christ's revelation - perhaps it is their first time at a Catholic Mass or their first time for years - could very well hear talk of becoming angels and think that Catholicism isn't really different than those comforting New Age beliefs that come without the expectations of moral and physical sacrifices. And if that were truly the choice, which belief system do you think they will choose?

#### **Is God the author of death?**

A common refrain among the lay faithful and even some celebrants is that death has some intended place in God's plan. 'God has a purpose for this,' we hear well-meaning friends tell an inconsolable widow, as if God takes pleasure in the consequences of sin.

Lost is the understanding that the only death ordained by God - the only one that can bring eternal salvation - is the death of Jesus Christ. All others deaths, our own included, are not of divine origin.

Again, there are pastoral inclinations to tell shocked survivors that good can come from the death of a loved one. But this is different from implying that death is necessary or that the cosmos will somehow be better off because your teenage daughter died of bone cancer.

People know that death isn't right, even if hearing otherwise brings brief comfort. When time offers the opportunity to reflect on the goodness of life and the unfathomable losses of death, survivors discern that while God may bring good out of evil, he should not and does require its existence to bring about some good.

#### **Liturgy for the living and the dead**

I've noticed that many funerals at many parishes are accompanied musically by 'On Eagles' Wings' and 'I Am the Bread of Life'. Families probably demand this music because that is all they have ever heard at funerals.

And while I've watched only one celebrant rearrange people in the front pews to hold their hands, many do preach Masses of canonisation. They might even tell us that the deceased, who is now an angel, is making spaghetti in heaven with their mother, father, spouse, and anyone they ever knew and loved - not that I would have anything against a heavenly banquet that includes pasta, but there are other things that need to be stressed, things about salvation, which we find only in the Gospels and hear the Eucharistic Prayers.

Many funerals offer a eulogy. If so, we will likely hear an understandably emotional but un-catechised friend or relative tell funny stories about the deceased. After we all laugh, they may instruct us that God has brought the deceased home through willing the terrible evil of death. Sadly, many may remember only these words.

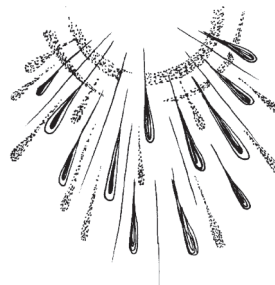
#### **A worthy setting**

All this contrasts with a recent funeral of a man whose son is a seminarian. The church provided a transcendent beauty, focusing on the paschal mysteries. It was a worthy setting for the celebrant's homily, which centred on the deceased's faith in the Eucharist. (The poor man had suffered greatly after an accident and found undeniable comfort whenever he was brought the Body of Christ.)

The funeral hymns soared, and the seminarians in attendance served with great dignity. There was no eulogy - the readings, the homily and the prayers of the Eucharist had said what needed to be said. All this made for a moment of profound grace and solace - a moment of divine continuity. Even the uninitiated could tell that something important was happening, that someone important was present.

When funeral liturgies are thus oriented and conducted, we are all reminded of realities far greater than the offerings of errant and comfortable words that do not last. We remember (or perhaps learn for the first time) what Christ has done for us. And we find hope in what he promises: that in communion with God and with the saints we can offer our prayers in expectation that the person we love might be offered true joy in heaven.

*William L. Patenaude writes for the Rhode Island Catholic*



PRECES nostras,  
quæsumus, Domine, benignus  
exaudi, ut, dum attollitur nostra  
fides in Filio tuo a mortuis  
suscitato in famulorum tuorum  
præstolanda resurrectione...

*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...*

## Gambian Christian Anniversaries August & September

**FIFTY YEARS AGO**, on 1st September 1968, the new premises at Campama, Banjul, of St Augustine's High School were officially opened, with Fr Michael Cleary (now Bishop Emeritus) as Principal. Other priests teaching at the school were Fr Vincent Comer, Fr John Hogan, Fr Seán Little and Fr Tom Tarmey, all Holy Ghost Fathers (Spiritans).

The building of the school had begun in 1966. The work was undertaken by the Public Works Department (PWD), partly funded by a £50,000 grant from the Commonwealth Development Fund. Cardinal Cushing of the Archdiocese of Boston, USA, donated \$75,000. Local funds were raised by bazaars, raffles and dances. Holy Spirit Church was also completed in 1968, and the first Mass there was a school Mass on 4th October 1968. The next development was the building of a house for priests teaching at the school. The work began in May 1968, and the first priests to take up residence there on 15th November 1968 were Fathers Comer, Hogan and Tarmey.

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

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

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

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

**14th August 1961:** Renovations to the clergy house at Bakau were completed.

**1st August 1964:** The new school building at Lamin was opened.

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

**6th September 1973 (35 years ago):** Arrival of Fr Joseph Gough (*right*) to assist Fr Pierre Sagna, Rector of the new Junior Seminary at Fajara. Later, Fr Sagna later became Bishop of St Louis du Sénégal, and Fr Gough became Principal of St Augustine's High School. PIX

**19th August 1979:** Fr John Hogan was appointed District Superior of the Holy Ghost Fathers (Spiritans) and Parish Priest at Bakau.

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

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

**7th August 1988 (20 years ago):** Brothers Henry, Milton and Senan of the Indian Province of the Christian Brothers took up residence at the house in Sam Jack Terrace in Banjul which had been bequeathed to the diocese by Dr Felix Blain. PIX?

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

**13th August 2003 (15 years ago):** Death in Britain of Coleridge Wallace ('Sonnie') Cole, former Director of Education, WAEC Representative in London and Headmaster of Marina International School.

**1st August 2006:** Fr Joseph Karbo succeeded Sr Philomena Barry as Director of GPI. PIX

**11th August 2006:** Farewell at the Catholic Educational Secretariat to the Assistant Education Secretary, Brother Milton Lawrence. He had worked in The Gambia since 1988, his posts including the headship of Our Lady of Fatima High School Bwiam.



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

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

**15th August 2007 (Sang Marie):** Bishop Ellison convened an Assembly for the Diocese of Banjul to be held from 30th March to 4th April 2008.

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

**25th September 2007:** Death in Britain of Antoine Nicholas Tabbal ('CB'), prominent businessman.

**21st September 2008 (10 years ago):** an accident during tree-felling at St Francis' Nursery School Tranquil brought down the D20,000 new roof and smashed newly-acquired furniture.

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

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

**25th-28th August 2009:** Around 60 young people took part in a camp at Basse. Among other activities, they undertook a two-day cleaning exercise.

**8th September 2009:** Fr Joseph Karbo, GPI Director, blessed 'Nazareth', a grotto at the Presentation Sisters' compound in Brikama.

**21st September 2009:** Death in Ireland of Dermot Roach, Irish layman who since the 1990s had helped many students. He worked at Fatima School Bwiam before retiring to Kunkujang Mariama.

**5th August 2010:** The Blessed Sacrament Choir of Kanifing began a visit to Dakar to give a concert and to sing at the Cathedral.

**17th September 2010:** Pupils of St John Vianney's School Bulock took part in a live television link with London as part of a programme in which Pope Benedict XVI, then visiting Britain, addressed Britain's school-children.

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



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

**24th September 2010:** An association for Senegalese Catholics was launched at the Father Farrell Hall Kanifing, and at GPI a workshop was held for priests and others on the forthcoming new English translation of the Mass.

**10th August 2013 (5 years ago):** St Martha's Society celebrated its 40th anniversary.

**17th August 2013 (5 years ago):** Bishop Robert Ellison, Fr Jean-Noël Faye and Fr Yenes Manneh took part in Sang Marie celebrations at Atlanta, USA.

**10th September 2013 (5 years ago):** Death of the long-serving catechist, 'OJ' – Matthew Jarjou.

**21st-28th September 2013 (5 years ago):** The Knights of St Peter & St Paul hosted the Biennial Council Meeting of the International Alliance of Catholic Knights.

**1st September 2015:** In retirement in Ireland, Bishop Emeritus Michael Cleary CSSp celebrated his ninetieth birthday.

**18th September 2016:** Sr Calixte Thomas (right), who served in The Gambia from 1998 to 1012, died at Bangalore, in her native India, at the age of 69.



Do  
you  
know?

- 1 Give another name for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- 2 Who, in the Old Testament, was David's closest friend?
- 3 What name is given to the book containing the prayers and readings for the Mass?
- 4 In which two Gospels does the Lord's Prayer ('Our Father') appear?
- 5 Name the Anglican Bishop of Gambia
- 6 Which 20th-century Pope is depicted on the right?

Answers on page 25



?  
**Question  
Box**

**Recently a friend invited me to his house. After giving me a beer, he began to show indecent images on his computer. When my friend saw my shock and embarrassment he laughed and said, 'You should grow up. Be broadminded. This is just harmless adult fun.'**

**I am a young adult, and I would like to be broad-minded. But I dislike pornography.**

**What does the Church say about it?**

LOOKING at pornography is addictive. It coarsens human relations, diminishing the respect we should feel for the dignity of every man, woman and child as a unique soul created by God.

*The Catechism of the Catholic Church* puts it thus:

'Pornography consists in removing real or simulated sexual acts from the intimacy of the partners, in order to display them deliberately to third parties.

'It offends against charity because it perverts the conjugal act, the giving of spouses to each other.

'It does grave injury to the dignity of the participants (actors, vendors, the public), since each one becomes an object of base pleasure and illicit profit for others.

'It immerses all who are involved in it in the illusion of a fantasy world. It is a grave offence.

'Civil authorities should prevent the production and distribution of pornographic materials.'

*Catechism of the Catholic Church 2354*

### **If Protestants wish to receive Communion they should become Catholics, says Cardinal**

FOLLOWING controversy in Germany, where some bishops have suggested that Lutheran spouses of Catholics should in certain circumstances be permitted to receive Communion, Cardinal Francis Arinze has said, 'If Protestants wish to receive Communion in Catholic churches they should become Catholics.'

From 2002 - 2008 Cardinal Arinze, who is Nigerian, was Prefect of the [Congregation for Divine Worship, a post now filled by a fellow West African, the Guinean Cardinal, Robert Sarah.

Speaking in Devon, England, Cardinal Arinze said, 'The Church has only one possession equal to the Mass and that is another Mass. Nothing else.'

The cardinal continued: 'The Eucharistic celebration of the Mass is not an ecumenical service. It is not a gathering of those who believe in Christ and who invent a prayer for the occasion. It is a celebration of the mysteries of Christ who died for us on the Cross, who made bread into his Body and wine into his Blood and told the apostles, "Do this in memory of me".'

'So the Eucharistic celebration of the Mass is the celebration of the faith community... in ecclesiastical unity with their pastor, their bishop and the Pope.,.,

'The Holy Eucharist is not our private possession which we can share with our friends.'





## from beyond the diocese

### Ghana cathedral project sparks controversy

GHANA is one of the most religious countries in the world, despite being constitutionally secular, but a project to build a new 'national cathedral' has not met universal approval.

Plans for the inter-denominational building, designed by the Ghanaian-British architect Sir David Adjaye (*right*), and to be located on some six hectares near Accra's Parliament, were unveiled earlier this year.



Designs show landscaped gardens and a concave structure housing a chapel, baptistry and 5,000-seat auditorium, as well as Africa's first Bible museum and documentation centre.

The building is intended to be 'a house of prayer for all people', and will host state occasions which have usually been held at Independence Square or the President's official residence.

Chika Okeke-Agulu, Professor of Art History at Princeton University in the US, wrote in the *New York Times* that the cathedral was 'a huge deal.... It signals that the country is poised to consolidate the gains of decades of democracy.' He predicted it would give Ghana a 'globally architectural landmark', and hoped it would spark similar projects across Africa.

But reaction to the plans has been mixed, with calls for the money to be better spent elsewhere.

Sir David Adjaye has been knighted by Queen Elizabeth II, and is best known for designing the National Museum of African-American History and Culture in Washington DC. He said it was 'an immense honour to be granted the opportunity to contribute something of this scale and import to my home country'.

#### Religion's major role

Religion plays a major role in Ghana. There are churches, mosques, street preachers and shrines to traditional faiths across the country.

In a 2012 Gallup poll of 57 countries, an overwhelming 96 per cent of Ghanaians said they were religious.

In the last national census in 2010, 71.2 per cent of Ghana's population of 23.6 million were recorded as Christian and 17.6 per cent as Muslim.

President Nana Akufo-Addo has appointed a 13-member board of religious leaders to raise funds for and manage the new cathedral. The projected overall cost has not been revealed. The government has donated land for the project, and insists that is all it is contributing.

'We should render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's,' said the General-Secretary of the Christian Council of Ghana, Cyril Fayose. 'The government meddling in church matters sometimes raises eyebrows to wonder why they are doing it... We are not so sure, the motives behind it are not very clear to us.'

#### 'Preferential treatment'?

James Kwabena Bomfeh Junior is hoping to stop the project before a stone is laid, and has mounted a legal challenge to the state's involvement, arguing it is unconstitutional. The government should be religiously neutral, but was showing preferential treatment to the Christian faith by supporting the project, he argues.

The Presidential Liaison for the cathedral, Clara Napaga Tia Sulemana, said Bomfeh's court case had stalled progress on fund-raising and development. She denied suggestions of favouritism, pointing to a government donation of land for a national mosque. The government has also funded Muslim activities, including participation in the annual Hajj pilgrimage.

For a cultural critic, Nii Kotei Nikoi, the question was less about government involvement. 'In one neighbourhood you can have five to six churches. The problem is that Accra is saturated with churches.' He added that said it showed that followers of the major religions were being catered for, but those of minor faiths or none were rarely considered.

### Global restrictions on religion increasing, study says

GOVERNMENT restrictions on religion continued to increase during 2016, according to a survey released by the Pew Research Center in the USA. 2016 is the most recent year that data was ready to be analysed.

2016 was the second year in a row to see an increase in the overall restrictions on religion in the 198 countries examined, which is 99.5 per cent of the world.

'In total in 2016, 83 countries (42 per cent) had high or very high levels of overall restrictions on religion – whether resulting from government actions or from hostile acts by private individuals, organisations and social groups – up from 80 (40 per cent) in 2015 and 58 (29 per cent) in 2007,' said Pew. This is the largest number of countries to be placed in the top category since Pew created the survey in 2007.

The survey separately analysed each country's religious persecution from government and private individuals. The Middle East and North Africa had the highest median levels of government restrictions.

The study acknowledged the role of nationalist groups in hostility towards religion. About 11 per cent of countries have government officials who used 'nationalist, and often anti-immigrant or anti-minority, rhetoric to target religious groups in their countries,' - a 5 per cent increase from the previous year. Europe had the highest percentage of countries falling under this category.

The results came from an analysis of laws in addition to individual or group violence against religion such as armed conflict or terrorism. Harassment was measured through data regarding attacks, arrests, destruction of church property and discrimination.

## Russian Orthodox Church, Vatican team up to rebuild Christian sites in Syria

THE RUSSIAN Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches have begun implementing a plan aimed at reconstruction of Christian churches and monasteries destroyed during the years of the Syrian war, according to Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, Chairman of the Department of External Relations of the Russian Orthodox Church.

‘We have taken on reconstruction, and some churches and monasteries are being rebuilt now. In particular, restoration work is nearing an end in Maaloula. It is one of the major holy sites in the Antioch Orthodox Church, a nunnery built in the location where the Aramaic language was spoken not long ago, the bishop said. ‘The nuns were forced to leave, but we are hoping now they will be able to return.’

Metropolitan Hilarion admitted that conditions remain tense in Syria. ‘On the other hand, we have to begin with something, and we have already begun without waiting for the moment when the conditions are ideal.’

Since March 2011 Syria has been facing a conflict between government forces and rebels who demand that President Bashar Assad should step down. According to the UN Refugee Agency, about five million Syrians had fled the country by the beginning of 2017. Syria had population of about 20 million people before the war. Nearly 500,000 people have been accommodated at refugee camps, while 470,000 have lost their lives in the war.

## New Cathedral for Bahrain

THE CHURCH of Bahrain and the Gulf recently celebrated the start of the construction of the new cathedral of Our Lady of Arabia, patron saint of the Arabian Peninsula.

The local Christian community is mainly composed of economic migrants and seasonal workers.

Situated some 20 kilometres from the capital, Manama, the compound will include the cathedral, a guest house, educational and pastoral out-reach facilities and administrative offices.

The land was donated by the Ruler of Bahrain, Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa. The ground-breaking ceremony was held on 10th June, and construction should be completed by the end of 2021.

The cathedral, under the patronage of Our Lady of Arabia, will be a testimony of the Christian presence in one of the most powerful monarchies of the region. As the country’s second place of Christian worship, the cathedral will accommodate up to 2,000.

A time capsule with a history of the Catholic Church and a history of the Church in the Vicariate will be interred in the cathedral’s foundations.

In Bahrain, Islam is the official religion and Islamic law underpins the country’s legal system.

The first Catholics, who number about 80,000 out of a total of 1.5 million inhabitants (10 per cent Christian), came originally from Iraq and Iran.

With the oil boom, hundreds of thousands of other Christians came from Sri Lanka, India, Lebanon, the Philippines and several Western countries.

At Christmas and Easter, the churches of Bahrain also welcome Christians from Saudi Arabia, where every religion other than Islam is banned.

Bahrain is also home to Jewish and Hindu communities.

## Rwanda shuts 700 churches and proposes stricter clergy guidelines

AFTER closing more than 700 churches and some mosques in March, Rwandan government officials have instituted guidelines for how churches operate.

The Office of the President has introduced a draft law that would require Christian and Muslim clerics to attain a university education. It would also bar clergy who have been convicted of genocide, genocidal ideology, discrimination or other sectarian practices.

The measure, according to government officials, will bring order among churches. It has received support from most legislators in Rwanda’s parliament.

Rwanda, like many African countries, has witnessed an upsurge in churches in both urban and rural areas. But in March the government shut down hundreds of churches in the capital, Kigali.

The action was replicated in other towns, amid support from some religious leaders and criticism from others. The authorities claimed that the churches lacked basic infrastructure, security and hygiene, and were contributing to noise pollution.

Those most affected by the shuttering were small Pentecostal churches.

Some religious leaders approve the government move. ‘Churches are mushrooming too quickly and are exploiting poor people. If they are not controlled, more and more will continue to come up,’ says Innocent Maganya, head of the Department of Mission and Islamic studies at Tangaza University College. ‘They are being started for personal gain, not for that of the followers... a bit of sanity is needed.’

Maganya says that other countries require pastors to have a degree or certificate, but that the requirement will affect many young churches like the Lutheran Church in Rwanda. The Catholic Church is dominant in Rwanda, and institutions that can offer a degree in divinity for other denominations are few.

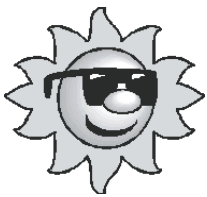
There are just over five million Catholics in Rwanda - about half the total population. The country is divided into nine dioceses.

### Catholic apology

On 20th November 2016 the Catholic Church in Rwanda released a statement apologising for the role of some of its members in the genocide in 1994.

‘We apologise for all the wrongs the Church committed. We apologise on behalf of all Christians for all forms of wrongs we committed... Forgive us for the crime of hate in the country to the extent of also hating our colleagues because of their ethnicity...’

‘We didn’t show that we are one family, but instead killed each other,’ said a statement signed by all nine bishops of the Catholic Episcopal Conference of Rwanda.



## Fee moi Gambia

### It takes all sorts...

THE OTHER day I came across a friend having a noisy disagreement with a young man about something which seemed rather trivial.

I said, 'Aren't you making rather a fuss?'

He retorted, 'Maybe; but I don't like boys who wear earrings!' (though the argument was nothing about earrings.)

I don't like such earrings, either, nor some young men's fancy hairstyles (based on their African heroes who earn millions playing football in Europe). But, except for the most grotesque of fashions, we should surely assess people by more than the way they dress.

Walk just a hundred metres from Westfield towards Serrekunda market, and you'll see all manner of garb from the head-to-toe envelopment of devout Muslim women to girls whose skirts cover very little, and from men in embroidered robes to boys who wear NYC basketball caps, flamboyant shirts and trendy trainers - and who are as conscious of fashion as their sisters.

Come to think of it, among Catholics, the variety of dress at Sunday Mass is pretty remarkable...

### An admission

I ADMIT I don't watch television and rarely listen to radio. This puts me, I know, in a small minority.

If you have access to satellite television as well as the two national channels, you have a choice of programmes; and no doubt the best of them, whether news, documentaries, sport or entertainment, are very good, even memorable.

But much else on television is uninspired, drab, or appeals to 'the lowest common denominator'.

Worse, for me, is being in a household where the television is on, but no one is watching, or others are constantly switching from channel to channel.

As for advertisements, I suppose they are necessary to pay for the programmes; but so many are loud, vulgar and repetitious. So I watch television as little as possible, preferring the company of real people and actual conversation to the 'small screen'.

Incidentally, one reason why many schoolchildren are poor listeners in the classroom is that at home there are so many distractions, including radio and television, that it's hard to gain their attention.

### Did it appeal – or not?

YOU may have watched on television all or part of the Royal Wedding in June.

It was remarkable for superb traditional pageantry, as are all royal events in the United Kingdom. But there was one remarkably untraditional element: the sermon by the Presiding Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the USA.

The message was simple: the redeeming power of love. The bishop was eloquent and emotional, employing the rhetorical flourishes and fervent tones that are rare in Anglican churches in England – and for that matter, in Catholic churches, too.

Such heart-on-sleeve emotion in the pulpit is much more common in the United States – and throughout the world, American-style, in what we call 'born-again' churches.

As you may imagine, the bishop's sermon provoked widespread comment. Some were impressed: 'Refreshing.' 'It made me think.' 'Just what was wanted to wake people up.' 'If there were more sermons like that, I'd go to church more often.'

But the sermon provoked equal disapprobation: 'Vulgar.' 'There was nothing to it, really, but polished pulpitry.' 'Most unsuitable for an English wedding.' 'It spoiled the whole occasion.'

Well, popes, bishops, priests and pastors - and for that matter, presidents, politicians, journalists and head teachers - know that you can't please everyone all the time. And there are no doubt many styles of preaching, effective in different ways to various congregations. But one essential ingredient, I'd say, whatever the style and content of the sermon, is sincerity.

Here's something you can try next Sunday. Outside church, when the Mass is over and there's lots of talk among the departing congregation, can you hear anyone mentioning the sermon? And if you ask someone what the sermon was about, will he or she be able to answer?

### Plastic, plastic everywhere

I CAN'T remember when it was that the government quite rightly banned the use of plastic bags in shops and markets. There have been some visible improvements – but the general environment in many crowded areas remains untidy, unsightly and unhygienic.

It's not a problem just for The Gambia, but for most of the planet. Throughout the world, people are being warned off the excessive and unnecessary use of plastic. We're told that if we continue to carelessly dump plastic containers, by 2030 the world's seas will contain more plastic than fish. One independent school in England has decreed that if pupils bring plastic bottles of water into school they will be punished as severely as if they were caught smoking.

It's not just plastic that's befouling our environment. Paper, too; and discarded material of all kinds. In brief: no one should add to the rubbish in our streets.

The other day, when I bought a small tube of toothpaste, the young lady at the supermarket check-out reached out for a paper bag. 'What do I want that for?' I asked.

A great deal of public education is called for. Those who take children to school should note whether the grounds look tidy, and whether pupils are given every encouragement to keep their environment pleasant and clean. Are there enough rubbish bins, and are they regularly emptied (and the contents efficiently disposed of)?

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I ASKED the owner of a business, 'How many people work here?'

He paused; then answered, 'I suppose, about half.'





## ***Giving Hope to a World in Need***

**The Gambia Programme  
Health, Nutrition, Agro-enterprise, Food Security  
40 Atlantic Road, Fajara. Telephone 4498000**

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

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



intervention is being implemented again in the two regions to prevent children from getting malaria. The two regions have been identified due to their relatively high malaria transmission.

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

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

### **Answers to 'Do you know?' page 21**

- 1 Confession
- 2 Jonathan, son of King Saul. 1 Samuel 14:1-46, 18:1-3,31. 2 Samuel 1:17-27.
- 3 Missal
- 4 Matthew 6:9-13 (the version used in the Catholic liturgy); Luke 11:2-4.5
- 5 The Rt Revd James Yaw Odico
- 6 Pope Paul VI (1963-1978). He implemented the reforms of the Second Vatican Council.

## Some weekday celebrations in July & August

### Saturday 4th August: St John Mary Vianney *priest*

AFTER difficult beginnings, especially with the study of Latin, Jean-Baptiste Marie Vianney was ordained in 1815, and three years later sent to the French village of Ars, not far from Lyon. He opened an orphanage for girls which soon became a model. But he is mostly revered as a confessor. Within a few years, penitents were coming from neighbouring parishes, from further afield, and from all of France. By 1855 there were almost 20,000 a year. In the last 10 years of his life, John Vianney spent 16 to 18 hours a day in the confessional. Pope Pius X commended John Vianney as a model pastor. He died in 1859 and was canonised in 1935. St John is also known as the *Curé d'Ars* (the Parish Priest of Ars). *In our own diocese, the church at Bullock is dedicated to him.*



### Thursday 9th August: St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross *martyr, religious*

ST TERESA Benedicta of the Cross, also known as St Edith Stein, was born into a Jewish family at Breslau (then in Germany, now Wroclaw, Poland). From being an atheist, Edith was baptised in 1922. For her, Catholicism was not the denial, but the fulfilment, of her Jewish inheritance. She moved from Germany to the Netherlands to avoid Nazi persecution, but in 1942 was arrested and sent to Auschwitz concentration camp, where she died in the gas chamber. She is remembered for her search for truth and her attempts to promote peace and understanding in the face of hatred and war. In 1987 Edith Stein was beatified by Blessed John Paul II, who went on to canonise her in 1998.

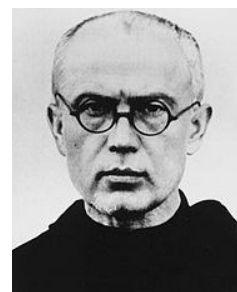


### Friday 10th August: St Lawrence *martyr*

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

### Tuesday 14th August: St Maximilian Kolbe *martyr*

MAXIMILIAN Kolbe was born in 1894 in Poland, then part of the Russian Empire. His father was German and his mother Polish. In 1907 he joined the Franciscans, and was ordained in 1918. The following year he returned to newly-independent Poland and founded a seminary and a radio station. In 1922 Fr Kolbe established a monthly periodical, and five years later founded a monastery which became a major publishing centre. In 1930 he left for Japan, and spent six years there, founding a monastery, a seminary and a Japanese newspaper. In his absence from Poland, his monastery began to publish Poland's top-selling daily newspaper. During the Second World War Fr Kolbe provided shelter for Polish refugees, including 2,000 Jews. In February 1941 he was arrested, and in May transferred to Auschwitz concentration camp. Four months later, following the escape of three prisoners, ten men were picked to be starved to death to deter further escapes. When one man cried out, 'My wife! My children!' Fr Kolbe volunteered to take his place. For two weeks he led the other condemned men in prayer. When only he remained alive, Fr Kolbe was given a lethal injection. His remains were cremated on 15th August, the feast of the Assumption. Maximilian Kolbe was beatified by Pope Paul VI in 1971 and canonised in 1982 by Pope St John Paul II.



### Tuesday 21st August: St Pius X *pope*

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



### Monday 27th August St Monica *matron*

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

### **Tuesday 28th August: St Augustine of Hippo *doctor***

AUGUSTINE is one of the four Latin Fathers of the Church (the others being Ambrose, Gregory the Great and Jerome). He was born in Roman North Africa in 354, and taught rhetoric in Carthage (now Tunis). Augustine fathered a son. After moving to Milan, in Italy, he converted to Christianity and was baptised by St Ambrose in 387. He returned to Africa to pursue a contemplative life, and in 390 became Bishop of Hippo (now Annaba, Algeria), a post he held until his death in 430. Augustine's writings have had enormous influence in the Church and beyond. They include his 'Confessions' and 'The City of God'.

### **Wednesday 5th September: St Teresa of Calcutta *religious***

BORN in Albania in 1910, Teresa founded the Missionaries of Charity in Calcutta, India, in 1950. For over 45 years she ministered to the poor, the sick, orphans and the dying. By the 1970s Teresa was internationally known for her work with the poor and helpless, and in 1979 she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. At the time of her death in 1997, her Sisters were operating in 123 countries. She was beatified by Pope St John Paul II and canonised by Pope Francis on 4th September 2016. *The Missionaries of Charity have ministered in The Gambia since 1994. We pray for their work here and throughout the world, and for the people of Mariamakunda, where the out-station church is dedicated to St Teresa.*



### **Thursday 13th September: St John Chrysostom *doctor***

JOHN was born in 347 at Antioch, Syria. After brilliant studies, he became a hermit. When his health gave way he returned to Antioch, was ordained, and as a preacher won many converts - 'Chrysostom' means 'golden mouthed'. He angered the rich by his concern for the poor, and was banished to Armenia. He later died en route to a more distant exile on the Black Sea.

### **Thursday 20th September: St Andrew Kim Tae-gŏn and the martyrs of Korea**

CATHOLICISM took root in Korea in the late 18th century. When the first French missionaries arrived in 1830 they found that Catholicism was already being practised. Kim Tae-gŏn's father was martyred for being a Catholic. Kim - or Andrew - was baptised at the age of 15, and ordained nine years later in Shanghai, China, by a French Bishop, Jean-Joseph Ferréol. He returned to Korea as the first Korean priest at a time when thousands of Christians were being persecuted. In 1846, aged 25, Fr Tae-gŏn was beheaded near Seoul. His last words were, 'Become Christians if you want to be happy after death...' On 6th May 1994, during a visit to Korea, Pope St John Paul II canonised Andrew Kim Tae-gŏn and 103 other Korean martyrs.

### **Thursday 27th September: St Vincent de Paul *priest***

VINCENT was born of peasant stock in Gascony, France, in 1581. Captured by pirates, he spent two years in Tunis as a slave. After escaping, he devoted his life to succouring the poor. He founded the Society of Mission Priests. He died in 1660, and was canonised in 1737. Vincent is patron saint of charitable works and societies.

Today we pray for members of the Society of St Vincent de Paul in The Gambia and its endeavours to help the poor as St Vincent did, without distinction of religion or origin.

*Omnes Sancti et Sanctae Dei, intercedite pro nobis*

*All holy men and women of God, intercede for us*

### **Proclaiming Mark's Gospel on Sundays**

IN Ordinary Time this year, the Gospel readings for most Sundays come from the Gospel according to St Mark.

St Mark's Gospel is the shortest of all the four gospels, and probably the first to have been written.

Mark recounts what Jesus did in a vivid style. He stresses Jesus' message about the kingdom of God breaking into human life as good news (1:14-15) and Jesus himself as the Gospel of God (1:1;8:35;10:29). Jesus is the Son whom God has sent to rescue humanity by serving and by sacrificing his life (10:45).

The Gospel is written in the common Greek of ordinary people. It is a basic handbook of the Christian faith, to teach believers about the Lord.

After the call of the first disciples, Jesus engages in teaching, preaching, healing, and exorcising demons. His teaching is chiefly in parables about the kingdom. Jesus exalts the word of God over 'the tradition of the elders' and sees defilement as a matter of the heart, not of unclean food. His kinship is with those who do the will of God - not even with mother, brothers or sisters by blood ties. Often his own disciples do not understand him.

A break-through comes with Peter's confession that Jesus is the Christ - the Messiah. Momentarily Jesus is glimpsed in his true identity when he is transfigured before three of the disciples, but by and large Jesus is depicted in Mark as moving obediently along the way to his cross in Jerusalem.



# Daily Mass Readings



## August & September

Sunday readings Year B Weekday readings Year 2

Celebrations in brackets ( ) are optional

Wed 1st Aug	Jeremiah 15:10,16-21. Psalm 58:2-5,10-11,17-18. Matthew 13:44-46	St Alfonso Maria de Liguori
Thu 2nd	Jeremiah 18:1-6. Psalm 145:2-6. Matthew 13:47-53	(St Eusebius de Vercelli or St Peter Julian Eymard)
Fri 3rd	Jeremiah 26:1-9. Psalm 68:5,8-10,14. Matthew 13:54-58	<i>abstinence</i>
Sat 4th	Jeremiah 26:11-16,24. Psalm 68:15-16,30-31,33-34. Matthew 14:1-12	St John Mary Vianney (Curé d'Ars)
<b>Sun 5th</b>	Exodus 16:2-4,12-15. Psalm 77:3-4,23-25,54. Ephesians 4:17,20-24. John 6:24-35.	<b>18th SUNDAY of YEAR</b>
Mon 6th	Daniel 7:9-10,13-14 or 2 Peter 1:16-19. Psalm 96:1-2,5-6,9. Matthew 17:1-9.	The TRANSFIGURATION
Tue 7th	Jeremiah 30:1-2,12-15,18-22. Psalm 101:16-21,?? Matthew 14:22-36	(St Sixtus II & companions or St Cajetan)
Wed 8th	Jeremiah 31:1-7. Psalm Jeremiah 31: 10-13, Matthew 15:21-28	St Dominic
Thu 9th	Jeremiah 31:31-34. Psalm 50:12-15,18-19. Matthew 16:13-23	(St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross)
Fri 10th	2 Corinthians 9:6-10. Psalm 111:1-2,5-9. John 12:24-26	St LAWRENCE <i>abstinence</i>
Sat 11th	Habakkuk 1:12 - 2;4. Psalm 9:8-13. Matthew 17:14-20	St Clare
<b>Sun 12th</b>	1 Kings 19:4-8. Psalm 33:2-9. Ephesians 4:32 - 5:2. John 6:41-51	<b>19th SUNDAY of YEAR</b>
Mon 13th	Ezekiel 1:2-5,24-28. Psalm 148:1-2,11-14. Matthew 17:22-27.	(St Pontian & St Hippolytus)
Tue 14th	Ezekiel 2:8 - 3:4. Psalm 118:14,24,72,103,111,131. Matthew 18:1-5,10,12-14.	St Maximilian Kolbe
	<b>Evening Mass of Assumption:</b> 1 Chronicles 15:3-4,15-16; 16:1-2. Psalm 131:6-7,9-10,13-14. 1 Corinthians 15:54-57. Luke 11:27-28.	
<b>Wed 15th</b>	Revelation 11:19, 12:1-6,10. Psalm 44:10-12,16. 1 Corinthians 15:20-27. Luke 1:39-56	<b>The ASSUMPTION (Sang Marie) Obligation</b>
Thu 16th	Ezekiel 12:1-12. Psalm 77:56-59,61-62. Matthew 18:21 - 19:1	(St Stephen of Hungary)
Fri 17th	Ezekiel 16:1-15,60,63. Psalm Isaiah 12:2-6. Matthew 19:3-12	<i>abstinence</i>
Sat 18th	Ezekiel 18:1-10,13,30-32. Psalm 50:12-15,18-19. Matthew 19:13-15	(of the BVM)
<b>Sun 19th</b>	Proverbs 9:1-6. Psalm 33:2-3,10-15. Ephesians 5:15-20. John 6:51-58	<b>20th SUNDAY of YEAR</b>
Mon 20th	Ezekiel 24:15-24. Psalm Deuteronomy 32:18-21. Matthew 19:16-22.	St Bernard
Tue 21st	Ezekiel 28:1-10. Psalm Deuteronomy 32:26-28,30,35,36. Matthew 19:23-30.	St Pius X
Wed 22nd	Isaiah 9:1-6. Psalm 112:1-8. Luke 1:26-38	Our Lady, Queen of Heaven
Thu 23rd	Ezekiel 36:23-28. Psalm 50:12-15,18-19. Matthew 22:1-14.	(St Rose of Lima)
Fri 24th	Revelation 21:9-14. Psalm 144:10-13,17-18. John 1:45-51,	St BARTHOLOMEW <i>abstinence</i>
Sat 25th	Ezekiel 43:1-7. Psalm 84:9-14. Matthew 23:1-12.	(St Louis or St Joseph Calasanz or of the BVM)
<b>Sun 26th</b>	Joshua 24:1-2,15-18. Psalm 33:2-3,16-23. Ephesians 5:21-32. John 6:60-69	<b>21st SUNDAY of YEAR</b>
Mon 27th	2 Thessalonians 1:1-5,11-12. Psalm 95:1-5. Matthew 23:13-22.	St Monica
Tue 28th	2 Thessalonians 2:1-3,14-17. Psalm 95:10-13, Matthew 23:23-26.	St Augustine of Hippo
Wed 29th	Jeremiah 1: 17-19. Psalm 70:1-6,15,17. Mark 6:17-29.	Beheading of St John the Baptist
Thu 30th	1 Corinthians 1:1-9. Psalm 144:2-7. Matthew 24:42-51.	
Fri 31st	1 Corinthians 1:17-25, Psalm 32:1-2,4-5,10-11. Matthew 25:1-13	<i>abstinence</i>
Sat 1st Sept	1 Corinthians 1:26-31. Psalm 32:12-13,18-21, Matthew 25:14-30	(of the BVM)
<b>Sun 2nd</b>	Deuteronomy 4:1-2,6-8. Psalm 14:2-5. James 1:17-18,21-22,27. Mark 7:1-8,14-15,21-23.	<b>22nd SUNDAY of YEAR</b>
Mon 3rd	1 Corinthians 2:1-5. Psalm 118:97-102, Luke 4:16-30.	St Gregory the Great.
Tue 4th	1 Corinthians 2:10-16. Psalm 114:8-14. Luke 4:31-37.	
Wed 5th	1 Corinthians 3:1-9. Psalm 32:12-15,20-21. Luke 4:38-44.	(St Teresa of Calcutta)
Thu 6th	1 Corinthians 3:18-23. Psalm 23:1-6. Luke 5:1-11	
Fri 7th	1 Corinthians 4:1-5. Psalm 36:3-6,27-28,39-40. Luke 5:33-39	<i>abstinence</i>
Sat 8th	Micah 5:1-4 or Romans 8:28-30. Psalm 12:6 Matthew 1:1-16,18-23	The BIRTHDAY of the BVM
<b>Sun 9th</b>	Isaiah 35:4-7. Psalm 145:7-10. James 2:1-5. Mark 7:31-37.	<b>23rd SUNDAY of YEAR</b>
Mon 10th	1 Corinthians 5:1-8. Psalm 5:5-7,12. Luke 6:6-11	
Tue 11th	1 Corinthians 6:1-11. Psalm 149:1-6,9. Luke 6:12-19	
Wed 12th	1 Corinthians 7:25-31. Psalm 44:11-12,14-17. Luke 6:20-26.	
	Or (for Mary) Galatians 4:4-7 or Ephesians 1:3-6,11-12. Psalm Luke 1:46-55. Luke 1:39-47. (Name of Mary)	
Thu 13th	1 Corinthians 8:1-7,11-13. Psalm 138:1-3,13-14,23-24. Luke 6:27-38.	St John Chrysostom
Fri 14th	Numbers 21:4-9 or Philippians 2:6-11. Psalm 77:1-2,34-38. John 3: 13-17	EXALTATION of the HOLY CROSS <i>abstinence</i>
Sat 15th	Hebrews 5:7-9. Psalm 10:2-6,15-16,20. John 19:25-27 or Luke 2:33-35	Our Lady of Sorrows
<b>Sun 16th</b>	Isaiah 50:5-9. Psalm 114:1-6,8-9. James 2:14-18. Mark 8:27-35	<b>24th SUNDAY of YEAR</b>
Mon 17th	1 Corinthians 11:17-26,33. Psalm 39:7-10,17, Luke 7:1-10	(St Robert Bellarmine)
Tue 18th	1 Corinthians 12:12-14,27-31. Psalm 99. Luke 7:11-17.	
Wed 19th	1 Corinthians 12:31 - 13:13. Psalm 32:2-5,12,22. Luke 7:31-35.	(St Janarius)
Thu 20th	1 Corinthians 15:1-11. Psalm 117:1-2,15-17. Luke 7:31-35.	St Andrew Kim Tae-gön & St Paul Chông Ha-asang
Fri 21st	Ephesians 4:1-7,11-13. Psalm 18:2-5. Matthew 9:9-13.	St MATTHEW <i>abstinence</i>
Sat 22nd	1 Corinthians 15:35-37,42-49. Psalm 55:10-14. Luke 8:4-15.	(of the BVM)

<b>Sun 23rd</b>	Wisdom 2:12,17-20. Psalm 53:3-6,8. James 3:16 – 4:3. Mark 9:30-37	<b>25th SUNDAY of YEAR</b>
Mon 24th	Proverbs 3:27-34. Psalm 14:2-5. Luke 8:16-18	
Tue 25th	Proverbs 21:1-6,10-13). Psalm 118:1,27,30,34-35,44. Luke 8:19-21	
Wed 26th	Proverbs 30:5-9. Psalm 118:29,72,89,101,104,163. Luke 9:1-6.	(St Cosmas & St Damian))
Thu 27th	Ecclesiastes 1:2-11. Psalm 89:3-6,12-14,17. Luke 9:7-9	St Vincent de Paul
Fri 28th	Ecclesiastes 3:1-11. Psalm 143:1-4. Luke 9:18-22.	(St Wenceslas or St Lawrence Ruiz) <i>abstinence</i>
Sat 29th	Daniel 7:9-10,13-14 or Revelation 12:7-12. Psalm 137:1-5. John 1:47-51	St MICHAEL, St GABRIEL & St RAPHAEL
<b>Sun 30th</b>	Numbers 11:25-29. Psalm 18:8,10,12-14. James 5:1-6. Mark 9: 38-43,45,47-48.	<b>26th SUNDAY of YEAR</b>



## The Pope's Prayer Intentions

### August

That any far-reaching decisions of economists and politicians may protect the family as one of the treasures of humanity.

### September

That young people in Africa may have access to education and work in their own countries.



## 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.**

AT the moment of consecration during the Mass, the gifts of bread and wine are transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ at the altar. The elements retain the appearance of bread and wine, but are indeed the actual Body and Blood of Christ. This is what is meant by the 'Real Presence': the actual, physical presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.

Christ instituted the Eucharist in order to remain with mankind until the end of time (John 14:18).

Because Catholics believe that Christ is truly and substantially present in the Eucharist, the Blessed Sacrament is given the same adoration and devotion that is accorded to Christ.

At the beginning of the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, a priest or deacon removes the sacred Host from the tabernacle and places it in the monstrance on the altar for adoration by the faithful. A monstrance is the vessel used in the Church to display the consecrated Eucharistic Host, during Eucharistic Adoration or Benediction.

When the monstrance contains the sacred Host, the priest does not touch it with his bare hands, but holds it with a humeral veil, a wide band of cloth that covers his shoulders. At all other times, the reserved Sacrament is kept locked in the tabernacle, so that the faithful may pray in the presence of the Sacrament.

Adoration ceremonies traditionally include Scripture readings, hymns, prayers and time for silent adoration.

Eucharistic Exposition and Benediction are no longer considered devotions, but rather as part of the Church's official liturgy.

This liturgy is designed to 'acknowledge Christ's marvellous presence in the Sacrament, and invites us to the spiritual union with him that culminates in sacramental communion.' (*Order for Solemn Exposition of the Holy Eucharist*, 7).

St. Alphonsus Liguori wrote: 'Of all devotions, that of adoring Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is the greatest after the sacraments, the one dearest to God and the one most helpful to us. By not only celebrating the Eucharist, but by praying before It outside of Mass, we are enabled to make contact with the very wellsprings of grace ...'

In a homily, Pope St John Paul II said, 'If in our time, Christians must be distinguished by the art of prayer, how can we not feel a renewed need to spend time in spiritual conversation, in silent adoration, in heartfelt love, before Christ present in the Most Holy Sacrament?'



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End-piece

# Catholics should have a great sense of humour

by Father FRANCIS PHILLIPS

IS it possible to be a practising Catholic and have a sense of humour?

Because Catholics know the divine purpose of their lives and the means to attain it that they can set about living it with joy and gusto. They actually have a much keener sense of fun than your average atheist or agnostic.

St Teresa of Avila is said to have commented, 'God protect me from sad-faced saints.'

St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, who had been a solemn and serious atheist philosopher before her conversion, admitted that she had never laughed so much as when she had become a Carmelite nun.

I have just read *Humility Rules: St Benedict's 12-Step Guide to Genuine Self-Esteem*, by J Augustine Wetta OSB (Ignatius Press.)

The author, a monk at St Louis Benedictine Abbey in the US, has written a very amusing as well as a wise book. It is only 173 pages; always a recommendation in my view.

## Self-esteem means self-abandonment

St Benedict's original Rule is a miracle of brevity and psychological insight. Its core message is that genuine self-esteem means self-abandonment; instead of fixating on yourself, you simply focus on God and only regard yourself in the light of his gaze.

Wetta explains that there are twelve rungs on the ladder of humility: fear of God, self-denial, obedience, perseverance, repentance, serenity, self-abasement, prudence, silence, dignity, discretion and reverence. When you think about it you see how they all hang together.

Wetta provides the reader with 'homework' at the end of



each chapter. These include the light-hearted, 'Spare the life of an insect. Bonus points if it's a mosquito' to the more difficult, 'Spend an entire day without correcting anyone' and 'Spend an entire day without looking at the screen.'

On 'Silence' he advises, 'When you meet a wise person, listen to him and you will learn wisdom; when you meet a foolish person, listen to him and you will learn patience; when you are alone, listen to God and you will learn everything else.'

Yet Wetta doesn't always suffer fools gladly; when a woman asked him, 'Why did you have to become a monk? Isn't it enough just to be a good person?' he told her, 'No! God wants you and me to be saints – to give and give until it hurts!'

Wetta's final 'homework' is, 'Give this book away' – so having read and laughed over it I shall do just that.

*Abridged from The Catholic Herald, London*

▶ A visiting American telephoned the parish church at Sandringham, where the Queen and the Royal Family were on holiday. 'Will Her Majesty be in church this Sunday?' he enquired.

'I'm afraid that we cannot promise,' the parish priest replied. 'But we confidently expect God to be there.'

▶ We no longer know how to be brief. For instance, the Lord's Prayer consists of 56 words, the Ten Commandments 297 words, the United States' Declaration of Independence 300 words, and the European Union Convention on the Importation of Bananas 26,911 words.

▶ The Old Testament story of Jonah confirms that you can't keep a good man down.

▶ The wolf will lie down with the lamb (Isaiah 11:6). But the lamb won't get much sleep.

▶ Christianity hasn't failed. It hasn't been tried.

▶ 'An eye for an eye' means everyone is blind. *Martin Luther King*

▶ Do not shout. When you do, you can hear no voice other than your own. *Mahatma Ghandi*

▶ God placed limits to a man's intelligence – but none to his stupidity.

▶ It is said of the United Kingdom that the Scots take themselves seriously - and anything else they can lay their hands on. The Welsh pray on their knees and on each other. The Irish will die for what they believe in, even if they do not know what that is. And the English proclaim that they are self-made men, thereby relieving the Lord of a heavy burden.

▶ God cannot count. With him, everyone is number one. *Cardinal Basil Hume*.





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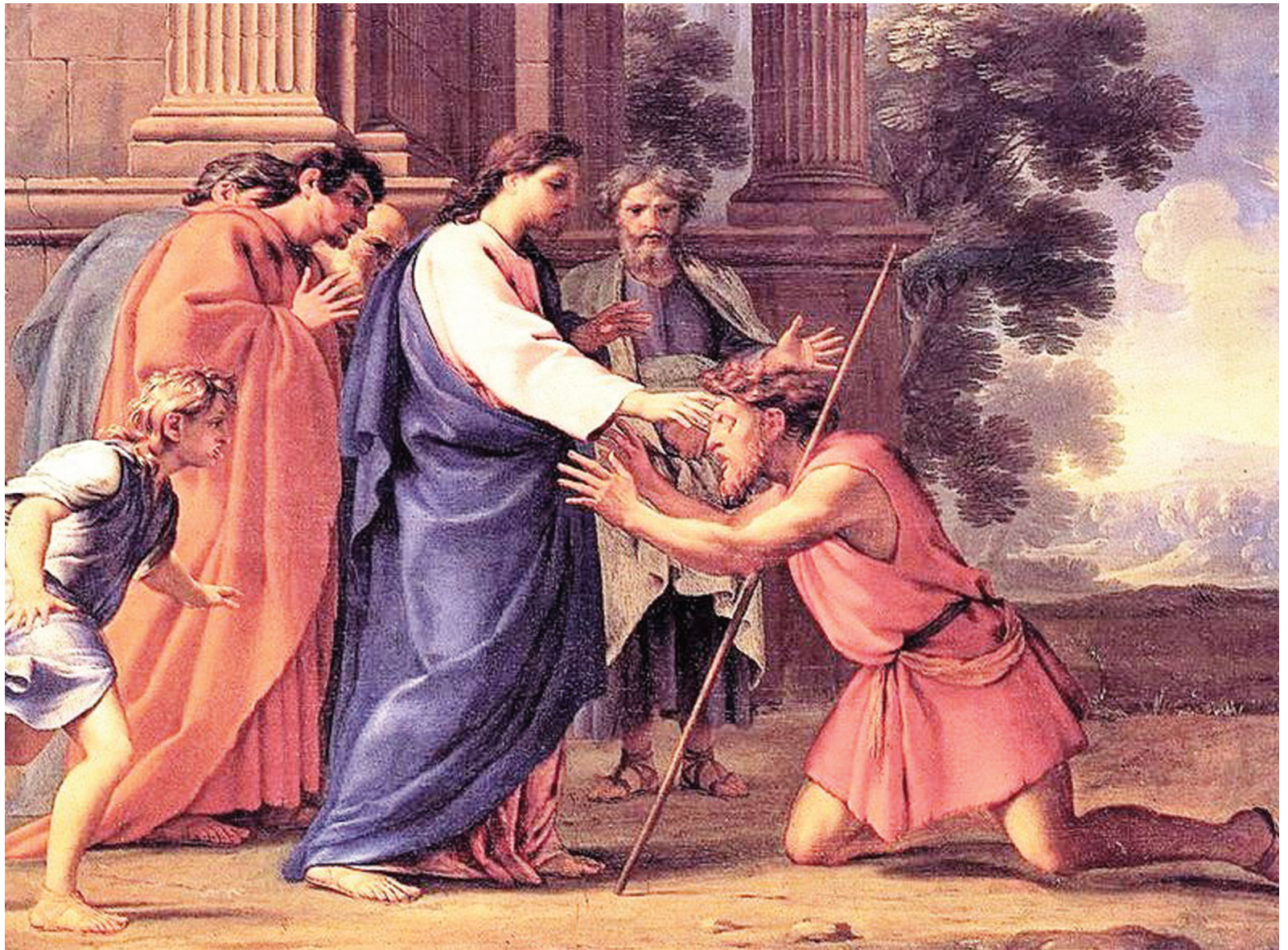
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## ‘He has done everything well’

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

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

And immediately his eyes were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly.

Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one; but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it.

They were astounded beyond measure, saying, ‘He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.’

*Mark 7:31-37*

*The Gospel reading for Sunday 9th September, 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time*

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

*(The Collect for the 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time)*

