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DIOCESE OF BANJUL NEWSLETTER

Our Mission and Vision

We entertain, we encourage, and we enlighten. More so, Diocese of Banjul Newsletter gives you the tools you need to feed your faith life, nurture our society and relationships, care for your family, and bring the light of Christ to others. We connect with our readers through personal stories of triumphs and struggles, joys and challenges, and the lighter side of Christian living.

Diocese of Banjul Newsletter is a source of support and encouragement for our society, especially those who love their faith, those who struggle with their faith, and those who long to learn more about the richness of Catholic tradition. More so, we strive to build a healthy society for the welfare of all.

Diocese of Banjul Newsletter seeks the positive in the world and in our Church. It emphasizes those things that our society is doing right and well, as a means of inspiring and encouraging others to do the same. It is hope-filled, optimistic, and forward-looking. In the main, the newsletter moves our readers beyond inspiration and toward action, and gives them the information, tools, and resources they need to answer God’s call to holiness and bring the light of Christ to others.



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EDITORIAL

Moving to The Singapore Lecture Room

It's Time for a Governance Upgrade to the Singaporean-style Governance

The Gambia is at a crossroads, with the cost of living rising to unbearable levels and plunging many into hardships. The prices of basic necessities like food and housing have surged to such an extent that they are suffocating the average Gambian, while the poorest among us are struggling to survive. Yet, this is not a hopeless situation. There is a path forward, and it is a path well-worn by one of the world's most successful nations, Singapore.

The parallels between The Gambia and Singapore are striking. Once, Singapore was poorer than The Gambia, a small nation with few resources and little hope. Yet, through disciplined leadership and smart economic policies, Singapore transformed itself into a global powerhouse. Today, it stands as a beacon of prosperity and efficiency, renowned as one of the Asian Tigers, and there is much The Gambia can learn from its journey.

Take a walk through Serrekunda market or any of The Gambia's local markets—Wellingara, Latrikunda (Sabiji), Brikama—and the pain of our economic crisis is evident. Prices have spiraled out of control; essential food items have skyrocketed putting a strain on household budgets. In the Serrekunda market, a bag of 50kg American Rice costs D1,750, while a bag of Fas Rice costs D2,100. A bag of sugar costs D2,325, a bag of onions D850, and a 20 litres of oil D2,850. These prices vary from one seller to another, as business owners set their own prices. The situation is similar in other local markets, such as Wellingara, Latrikunda (Sabiji), and Brikama, among others.

These are not just numbers. They represent the unbearable weight pressing down on families, forcing many to make impossible choices. What should we eat? Where will we live? The cost of renting a home has skyrocketed to 150% every quarter, leaving many with little left for other essentials after paying rent.

At the heart of this crisis is not just global economic pressures but also our leaders' mismanagement of our resources and a lack of economic discipline. Without proper fiscal management and long-term planning, the nation finds itself in a spiral of inflation and poverty. However, it doesn't have to be this way.

Half a century ago, Singapore was mired in poverty, much like The Gambia. However, its leadership took bold, visionary steps to lift the country out of economic despair. Through a combination of fiscal discipline, investment in human capital, and a commitment to clean governance, Singapore managed to transform itself from a struggling state into an economic powerhouse.

What lessons can The Gambia draw from this remarkable journey?

- **Balancing the Budget:** Singapore's government was obsessed with fiscal discipline, ensuring that the country avoided persistent budget deficits. The Gambia, similarly, needs to get its fiscal house in order, limiting

wasteful spending and focusing on investments that generate long-term returns.

- **Investing in Citizens:** Singapore prioritized its people. Through education and public housing programs, the country ensured that its citizens were equipped to drive economic growth. The Gambia must do the same by investing in education and vocational training, ensuring that every Gambian can participate in and benefit from the nation's future prosperity.
- **Lean Government, Big Results:** Singapore runs a lean government, ensuring that it spends money efficiently and avoids unnecessary social transfers. For The Gambia, trimming the fat from government spending and improving efficiency would free up vital resources to tackle pressing issues like housing and food insecurity.
- **Economic Diversification:** Singapore did not limit itself to one sector of the economy. It moved from low-wage manufacturing to becoming a global hub for finance, technology, and shipping. The Gambia, with its untapped potential in agriculture, fisheries, and tourism, and strategic geographical location must diversify its economy and develop export-oriented industries that can stabilize food prices, create jobs, and attract much-needed revenue.

- **Housing: A Gambian Dream?**

Singapore's housing policy is another area from which The Gambia could learn. Over 80% of Singapore's population live in public housing, providing affordable, quality homes to even the lowest-income families. For The Gambia, introducing a comprehensive public housing program could be transformative. With a focus on affordable homes, rent control, and collaboration with private sector and international partners, we could alleviate the housing crisis and give every Gambian a fair shot at homeownership.

The Way Forward: Learning from the Best

The unchecked rise in the cost of living in The Gambia requires bold and immediate action. While it is true that global economic factors play a role in the crisis, the mismanagement of our economy and lack of investment in productive sectors have worsened the situation. Singapore's transformation offers a powerful example of how disciplined leadership, fiscal responsibility, and investment in human capital can turn a struggling nation into a global success story.

By focusing on transparency, reducing corruption, and reining in wasteful government spending, The Gambia can begin to reallocate resources toward solving its most pressing challenges—housing, food security, and job creation. Moreover, investing in education and skills training will empower our people to drive the country's economic future, while diversifying the economy will stabilize prices and provide new streams of revenue.

The time for action is now. Our leaders must learn from Singapore, not just by visiting but by bringing home the lessons of fiscal discipline, prudent management of the economy, strategic investment, and good governance. This is how The Gambia can emerge from the shadows of economic hardship and build a brighter, more prosperous future for all.



October's Grace

The Reverence of the October Devotion, and an Invitation into an Exploration of Its Significance.

October holds a unique significance for Catholics worldwide, primarily due to its association with the Rosary and the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary on October 7th. For Catholics, October is a month of deep spiritual reflection. The Rosary is believed to be a spiritual weapon against sin, temptation, and evil, and praying it in October is seen as particularly powerful due to the Church's special focus on it during this month. It becomes a time for Catholics to unite in prayer, offer petitions for world peace, seek personal conversion, and ask for Mary's intercession. Moreover, many parishes and communities organize special Rosary gatherings, devotions, and processions during this month, reinforcing the sense of unity and communal prayer that is central to the Catholic faith. For individual Catholics, the power of the Rosary is experienced through its calming, meditative rhythm and its focus on the life of Christ, making it a tool for personal spiritual growth.

Hence, the Catholic Church dedicates the entire month to praying the Rosary, encouraging believers to deepen their devotion to this powerful prayer. The Rosary is a form of meditation on the life of Christ, seen through the eyes of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is not just a repetitive prayer but a spiritual journey through the Joyful, Sorrowful, Glorious, and Luminous Mysteries, offering Catholics an opportunity to reflect on the core mysteries of the faith.

Historically, the month of October became associated with the Rosary after Pope Pius V attributed the Christian victory in the Battle of Lepanto in 1571 to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary through the Rosary. In gratitude, he established the Feast of Our Lady of Victory, later renamed the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, encouraging Catholics to pray the Rosary as a powerful tool for spiritual protection and intercession.

October, thus, holds a special place in the heart of the Catholic Church as a month of grace, being dedicated to the Rosary, one of the most powerful and cherished forms of prayer in the Catholic tradition and a cardinal source of graces. This devotion, known as the October Rosary Devotion, is not only a call to deeper reflection but also a time for Catholics to unite in spiritual solidarity, seeking the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The practice has roots deep within the history of the Church and serves as a profound means of contemplating the mysteries of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is a tradition that all Catholics are urged to embrace, not simply as a ritual, but as a spiritual necessity, offering hope and guidance in a world often marked by suffering and confusion.

In effect, the Rosary is a spiritual tool with immense significance. Each bead represents not just a prayer, but an opportunity to meditate on the life of Christ through the lens of the Blessed Virgin Mary, His mother and our intercessor. By praying the Rosary, Catholics are invited into a deeper relationship with both Jesus and Mary, contemplating the mysteries of faith and reflecting on the divine plan of salvation.

During October, the Church encourages Catholics to not only pray the Rosary privately but also gather together

in communal settings to recite it. This public devotion fosters unity within the Church, reminding the faithful that they are part of a global community of believers, bound together in their love for Christ and the Blessed Virgin.

Why Every Catholic Must Partake in the October Devotion

The Rosary is often referred to as a "spiritual weapon"; a means of obtaining grace, fighting evil, and seeking the protection of Mary. In today's world, marked by increasing secularism, division, and turmoil, the need for spiritual fortitude is more critical than ever. Praying the Rosary equips the faithful with the strength to confront these challenges, relying on the grace of God and the powerful intercession of the Virgin Mary.

One of the greatest reasons every Catholic should partake in this devotion is the transformative power it offers. Through the Rosary, the mysteries of the Gospel come alive in the hearts of the faithful. The Joyful Mysteries, focusing on the Annunciation and Nativity, invite Catholics to reflect on the profound love of God made manifest in the incarnation of Christ. The Sorrowful Mysteries, meditating on Christ's Passion, draw the faithful into the depths of His suffering for the redemption of humanity. The Glorious Mysteries, culminating in the Resurrection and the Coronation of Mary as Queen of Heaven, fill the heart with hope, reminding us of the ultimate victory of Christ over death and the promise of eternal life.

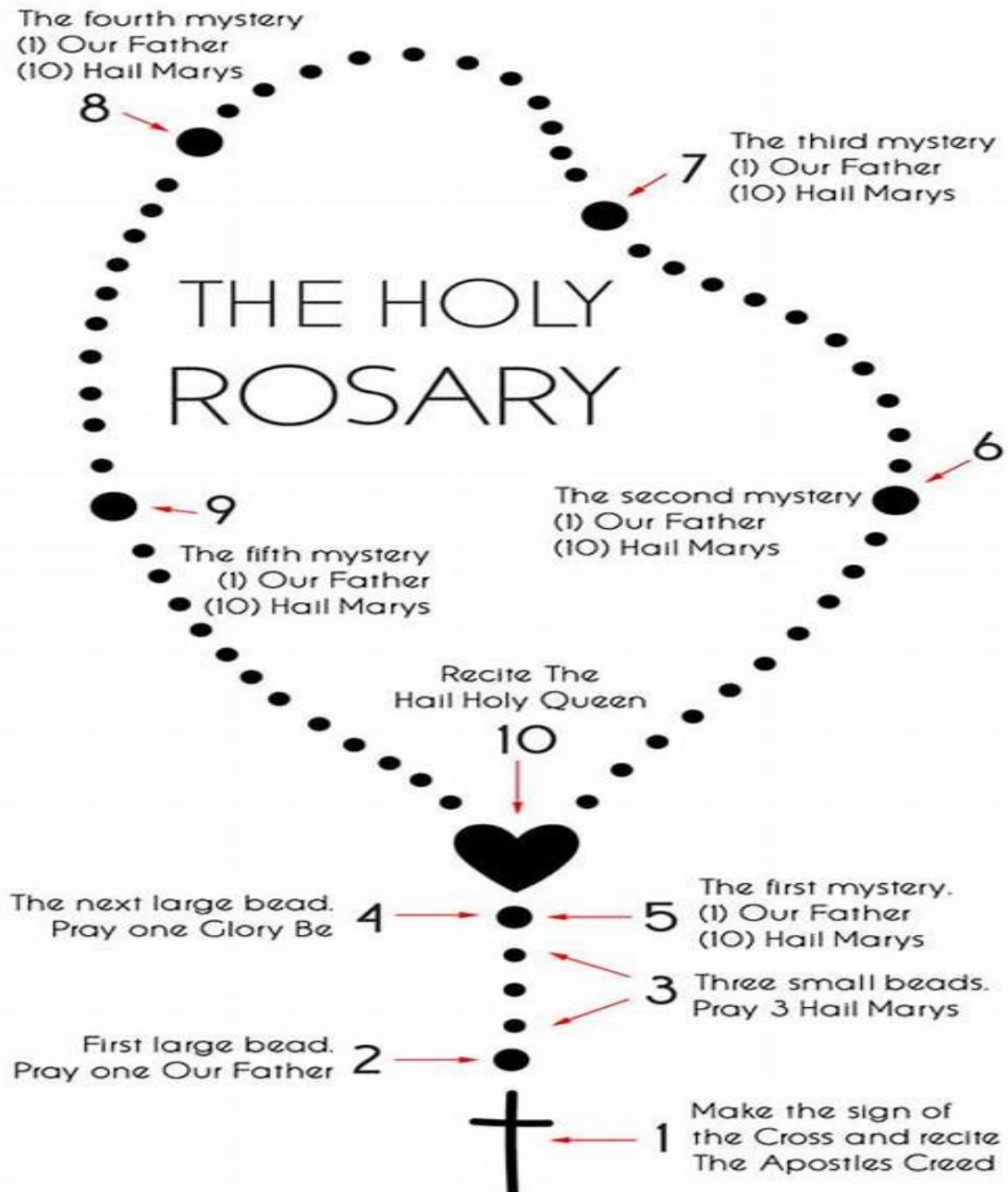
Furthermore, Pope Leo XIII, often referred to as the "Pope of the Rosary," emphasized the importance of the October devotion, writing several encyclicals urging Catholics to turn to the Rosary in times of trouble. He saw the Rosary as a powerful antidote to the crises of his time, and his message remains just as relevant today. Pope John Paul II also had a deep devotion to the Rosary, describing it as "the school of Mary," where believers could learn the life of Christ through the eyes of His mother.

In addition to spiritual transformation, the Rosary provides immense peace and consolation. Many Catholics can testify to the calming and centering effect of the Rosary, particularly in times of personal trial or distress. As a prayer of both vocal and meditative elements, the Rosary engages the whole person; body, mind, and soul. In a world where anxiety and fear often dominate, turning to the Rosary offers a space for divine encounter and solace.

Moreover, the Rosary brings us closer to Mary, who is not only the Mother of Christ but also our mother. In the Rosary, we seek her intercession, knowing that as a loving mother, she hears our pleas and brings them before her Son. She is the mediatrix of grace, and through the Rosary, we place ourselves under her maternal care, trusting that she will guide us toward Christ and protect us from all spiritual dangers.

The Call to Action: Engage in the October Devotion

The October Rosary Devotion is not just a tradition to be observed out of habit, but a call to spiritual renewal. In this month, Catholics are encouraged to come together,



TheLuminousBeads.com

whether in families, parishes, or communities, to pray the Rosary with fervor. It is a time to remember the power of prayer, the mercy of God, and the love of Mary.

For those who may struggle with the time commitment or feel unfamiliar with the Rosary, the Church provides numerous resources, from guided Rosary sessions to pamphlets and apps that make it easier than ever to engage with this powerful prayer. The important thing is to begin, knowing that each Hail Mary is a step closer to the heart of Christ through His mother.

In conclusion, October presents an opportunity for all Catholics to deepen their faith through the Rosary. It is a time to unite as a Church, offering prayers for personal intentions, for peace in the world, and for the Church itself. In a world often dominated by distraction and superficiality, the Rosary offers a space for deep, meditative prayer, a chance to encounter Christ through the loving gaze of His mother. As Catholics, we are called to embrace this devotion fully, allowing it to transform our

hearts, strengthen our spirits, and draw us ever closer to the divine love that sustains us. Let us heed the call and partake in this beautiful and powerful devotion.

Connection to the Family

October is also seen as a time to foster family prayer. The Rosary has been traditionally considered a family devotion, and the Church encourages families to pray the Rosary together during this month. It strengthens family bonds and draws families closer to the heart of the Church's teachings on prayer and devotion to Mary.

In conclusion, the power of October in Catholic life lies in its emphasis on the Rosary, a devotion that brings Catholics closer to the life of Christ and the intercession of Mary. Whether through individual meditation or community gatherings, the Rosary transforms October into a spiritually rich month for Catholics, filled with prayer, reflection, and renewed faith.

DEVELOPMENTS IN
THE CHURCH

The Newest Devotion to the Virgin Mary

“Virgin Mary requested that December 8, the feast of the Immaculate Conception, be designated as the “Hour of Grace for the World.” She promised that many divine and bodily graces would be received through this devotion if people prayed at noon, either in church or at home”.

The latest Marian devotion approved by the Catholic Church is associated with the apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary to Pierina Gilli, which occurred in Montichiari and Fontanelle, Italy, between 1947 and 1966. This devotion, known as "Maria Rosa Mystica" or "Our Lady Mystical Rose," received official approval from the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith (DDF) on July 8, 2024, through a letter signed by Cardinal Victor Manuel Fernandez and approved by Pope Francis. The approval highlights that the messages conveyed by Gilli align with Catholic doctrine and emphasizes the spiritual significance of the devotion, which calls for prayer, penance, and sacrifice. The letter also clarifies certain aspects of the messages to prevent misunderstandings while affirming their positive impact on the faithful.

The "Fountain of Grace" in Fontanelle holds significant importance in the context of the Marian apparitions experienced by Pierina Gilli. This miraculous spring was blessed by the Blessed Virgin Mary during her second series of apparitions to Gilli in 1966.

Pierina Gilli, documented the apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary to her in detail in her diaries. Here are the key points about how she described the apparitions:

First Apparition in Spring 1947

The Virgin Mary appeared to Gilli privately while she was praying in a hospital chapel in Montichiari, Italy.

Mary was wearing a violet dress and white veil, with an expression of sorrow and tears in her eyes.

She showed her heart pierced with three swords and asked for prayer, penance, and sacrifice.

Second Apparition on July 13, 1947

Our Lady appeared again to Gilli dressed in white, with three roses instead of swords in her breast: a white one, a red one, and a yellow one symbolizing prayer, sacrifice, and penance respectively.

When asked who she was, Mary responded: "I am the mother of Jesus and the mother of all of you. Our Lord sends me to bring a new Marian devotion to all religious orders and institutes, male and female, and to the priests of this world."

She expressed her wish for July 13 to be celebrated annually in honor of the Mystical Rose.

Subsequent Apparitions in 1947

Mary appeared to Gilli five more times in 1947, including public apparitions in November and December.

On December 8, the feast of the Immaculate Conception, Mary declared the 8th of December at noon as the "Hour of Grace for the World", promising divine and bodily graces through this devotion.



Apparitions in 1966

After a long period, the Virgin Mary appeared to Gilli again in 1966, blessing a miraculous spring in Fontanelle, known as the "Fountain of Grace".

Mary asked Gilli to place a crucifix there and encourage the faithful to ask pardon from her divine Son before drawing or drinking the water.

Gilli's diaries, which were included in the Vatican's approval letter, reveal her humble trust in Mary's maternal guidance and provide great detail about the apparitions and messages she received.

In fact, the key messages conveyed by the Blessed Virgin Mary to Pierina Gilli during her apparitions from 1947 to 1966 in Montichiari and Fontanelle, Italy, center around themes of prayer, penance, and the call to conversion. Here are the main messages:

1. Call for Prayer and Penance: Mary emphasized the importance of prayer, penance, and sacrifice as means to obtain mercy from God. She urged the faithful to engage in these practices to avert divine justice and to seek forgiveness for their sins. During her apparitions, she stated, "Whoever will atone for those sins will receive my blessing and graces."

2. The Hour of Grace: Mary requested that December 8, the feast of the Immaculate Conception, be designated as the "Hour of Grace for the World." She promised that many divine and bodily graces would be received through this devotion if people prayed at noon, either in church or at home.

3. Symbolism of the Roses: In one of her appearances, Mary presented herself with three roses; white, red, and yellow, symbolizing prayer, sacrifice, and

penance, respectively. She conveyed that these elements are essential for spiritual growth and intercession.

4. Mediatrix Role: Mary described her role as the Mediatrix between humanity and her Divine Son, Jesus Christ. She expressed her deep concern for the offenses against God and her desire to intercede on behalf of humanity to obtain mercy and avert punishment.

5. Annual Celebrations: Mary requested specific dates for annual celebrations, including July 13, which is to be honored in her title of "Mystical Rose," and emphasized the need for special acts of devotion on these days.

6. Message of Hope and Conversion: Throughout her messages, Mary conveyed a sense of hope, urging the faithful to seek conversion and return to God. She reassured them that through sincere prayer and penance, they could find forgiveness and grace.

7. Encouragement for Clergy: Mary specifically called upon priests and religious leaders to guide their congregations towards holiness and to address the moral failings within society. She emphasized that their role is crucial in leading others to repentance and spiritual renewal.

Significance of the Fountain of Grace

Miraculous Blessing: The fountain (spring) was specifically blessed by Mary, who instructed Gilli to kiss the soil where the water sprang forth. This act was meant to encourage the faithful to seek pardon from Jesus before

drawing or drinking the water, emphasizing the importance of repentance and humility.

Symbol of Healing and Grace: The Fountain of Grace is viewed as a source of divine mercy and healing. Many pilgrims visit the site to drink from the water, believing it to possess miraculous properties that can lead to physical and spiritual healing.

Encouragement of Penance: In her messages, Mary emphasized the need for prayer, penance, and sacrifice. The fountain serves as a reminder of these spiritual practices, inviting the faithful to deepen their relationship with God through acts of devotion.

Connection to the Marian Devotion: The fountain is closely linked to the broader devotion to Mary under the title "Mystical Rose, Mother of the Church," which was officially recognized by the Vatican in July 2024. This recognition highlights the spiritual and pastoral benefits of the messages associated with the apparitions, including those related to the Fountain of Grace.

In summary, the Fountain of Grace is significant as a site of miraculous blessing, healing, and a call to repentance, embodying the spiritual messages conveyed by the Blessed Virgin Mary during her apparitions to Pierina Gilli. The messages from the Blessed Virgin Mary to Pierina Gilli highlight a profound call for spiritual renewal through prayer, penance, and the intercession of Mary as a loving mother who desires the salvation of all souls.

CURRENT AFFAIRS

THE PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA PLEDGES TO BUILD A 2 BILLION DALASI HOSPITAL AT STATE HOUSE

By Phillip Saine

The provision of public facilities and their location within the country had had challenges in the past. Myopic and or political interferences had negative treats in the Gambia; namely the siting of a community well, prayer house, cemetery and a health facility.

The provision of medical and health services, irrespective of the cost and location, is a function of the Ministry of Health. The Ministry comprises a department of Medical and Health and equipped with a Health Planning Unit. This Unit relies much on other specialists for statistical analysis, epidemiologic and demographic observations. A good knowledge of these scientific observations are necessary to determine the need and location of a health facility. The required population must exist, so too the prevailing health needs, priorities and sustainability. The current debate as to the appropriateness of constructing a hospital or a health clinic inside or outside the State House further exposes the weakness apparent at the Ministry of Health (MOH) and the dire need for ‘System Change’ in The Gambia. If the Ministry of Health is failing in its responsibility, another institution, namely, State House, will fill the gap.

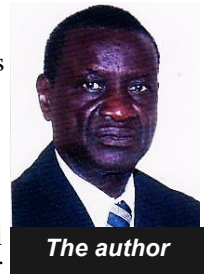
The Gambia may accept any form of assistance from other development partners but the ‘NEED’ must be established and differentiated from a ‘WANT’. The Medical and Health Providers (*The Minister of Health and Director of Medical and Health Services*) shall objectively assess the provision of a hospital or dispensary in the country. The department, guided by the National Health Policy and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) will determine the specialty of the facility, intended catchment areas, prevailing diseases, etc. It is worth mentioning that the national development plan focuses on the following

priorities:

- Quality and Equitable Essential Health services to all towards a Universal Health Coverage
- Maternal, Childhood, and Reproductive Services
- Communicable, Non- Communicable Diseases and Injuries

Policy priorities are measures that will reduce morbidity and mortality of major diseases, promote healthy lifestyle, reduce health risks and exposures associated with negative environmental consequences. The MOH aims at raising the standard of living of the Gambian population rather than a privileged group. The Department of Health has been on record refusing medical supplies from a Danish philanthropy who dictated where they were to be distributed. The Director insisted that, having a better understanding of The Gambia’s health needs, would utilize them where needed most.

Locating a health facility within the State House will restrict access by the public or interfere with required security within the State House. The public, especially Banjulians, use to have greater access to State House vicinity enjoying the ‘Change of Guards’ and a ‘shortcut’ way to and from the Albert Market. This is no more. The justification for the fortification of State House has been for security reasons. The existing State House, therefore, maybe provided with a ‘First Aid’ Room/Facility to care for its staff on emergency, waiting for evacuation/transfer to a hospital. This is the situation for institutions or places of work typically: manufacturing industries, educational institutions and sports facilities.



The author

For The Gambia Our Homeland!

THE POPE'S PRAYER INTENTIONS 2024

OCTOBER: FOR A SHARED MISSION

We pray that the Church continue to sustain in all ways a Synodal lifestyle, as a sign of co-responsibility, promoting the participation, the communion and the mission shared among priests, religious and lay people.

NOVEMBER: FOR ANYONE WHO HAS LOST A CHILD

We pray that all parents who mourn the loss of a son or daughter find support in their community and receive peace and consolation from the Holy Spirit.

VIEWPOINT

THE BIBLICALLY OF THE HOLY ROSARY

By Philip Anthony Sylva

The rosary, in its entirety, is biblical and rooted in the Word of God. Therefore, the basis of the rosary is the bible; in fact, the rosary is a vessel of evangelization. The rosary begins, first and foremost by invoking the divine character and identity of God:

In the name of The Father, and of The Son, and of The Holy Spirit

Genesis reveals: "In the beginning, when God created the universe, the earth was formless and desolate. The raging ocean that covered everything was engulfed in total darkness, and the Spirit of God was moving over the water. Then God commanded. 'Let there be light' – and light appeared" [Genesis 1:1-3]. The foregoing scriptural quotation presents The Triune God-Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier. The Father is The Creator (God The Father). "Let there be light": is the Word of God (The Word Incarnate) – Jesus Christ, The Redeemer (God The Son). The Holy Spirit is The Sanctifier (God The Holy Spirit). Thus, it is sacrosanct to invoke God and begin with Him: "As the scripture says, 'Everyone who calls out to the Lord for help will be saved'" [Romans 10:13]. Moreover, God is our eternal Father in accordance with Holy Scripture: [Isaiah 63:16; 64:8].

Father, Son and Holy Spirit is likewise manifested in the subsequent biblical text: "As soon as Jesus was baptized, he came up out of the water. Then heaven was opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God coming down like a dove and alighting on him. Then a voice said from heaven, 'This is my own dear Son, with whom I am pleased'" [Matthew 3:16-17]. Similarly, Jesus tasked his disciples: "Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit" [Matthew 28:19]. So the Bible reveals, time and again, that God exists as The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit.

The Apostles' Creed (Credo)

The Apostles' Creed reads: "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. From thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen."

"I believe in God": [Romans 10:10-11, Psalms 125:1, Psalm 25:2];

"The Father Almighty": [2 Corinthians 1:3, Sirach 23:4, Luke 23:34, Luke 23:46, Psalms 91:1, Psalms 46:7, Psalm 9:2, Psalm 21:7, Jeremiah 32:15];

"Creator of heaven and earth": [Genesis 1:1, Jeremiah 32:17, Psalms 134:3, Psalms 121:2, Ephesians 3:9];

"and in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord": [Daniel 7:13-14, Isaiah 9:6-7, Matthew 1: 18-21; 3:16-17; 16:13-16; 17:4-5, Luke 1:31-33, Mark 14:61-62; 15:39, John 1:14; 1:48-49; 3:18; 1:17-18; 3:16, Philippians 2:11, Psalm 2:7-8, Acts 13:32-33; 19:17; 20:21, Romans 1:3-4; 14:9, 1 Corinthians 1:2-3; 1:9; 8:6, 2 Corinthians 1:19, Galatians 6:14, Colossians 1:15; 1:20, 1 Thessalonians 1:10, Hebrews 1:1-2; 1:4-6; 1:8-12, 2 Peter 1:16-17, 1 John 1:3; 1:7; 3:23; 5:5; 5:10-12];

"who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary": [Matthew 1:18, Matthew 1:20, Matthew 1:23, Isaiah 7:14];

"suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried": [Luke 23:1, John 19:1, Matthew 27:24-26, Luke 23:24-25, Mark 15:24, John 19:15-18, Mark 15:37, Luke 23:46, Matthew 27:50, Matthew 27:57-60, John 19:38-42].

"He descended into hell": [Ephesians 4:9-10].

"The third day he rose again from the dead": [Matthew 28:6-7, Mark 16:6, Luke 24:6-7, Acts 2:24, Mark 8:31].

"He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father": [Psalm 110:1, Acts 1:9, Luke 24:51, Mark 16:19, Acts 2:34, Hebrews 12:2, Ephesians 1:20].

"From thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead": [Acts 1:11, Romans 2:16, 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17, 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10, Revelation 20:12-15, Malachi 3:5, Matthew 24:42, Matthew 25:31-46, Mark 13:26, 1 Peter 4:5, 2 Timothy 4:1].

"I believe in the Holy Spirit": [Genesis 1:2, 1 Samuel 19:20, 2 Kings 2:16, Psalm 51:11, Isaiah 61:1, Ezekiel 2:2, Ezekiel 11:24, Ezekiel 11:1, Joel 2:28, Matthew 1:18, Matthew 3:16, Matthew 4:1, Matthew 28:19, Mark 1:10, Luke 1:35, John 1:33, John 14:17, John 16:13, John 20:22, Acts 2:4, Acts 5:3, Acts 6:10, Acts 7:55, Acts 9:17, Acts 11:24, Acts 10:38, Acts 19:2, Acts 19:6, Acts 20:22-23, Acts 20:28, Romans 8:2, Romans 8:5, Romans 8:14-15, Romans 8:26-27, Romans 15:13, 1 Corinthians 2:14-15].

"The Holy Catholic Church": [Matthew 16:18, John 10:15-17, John 10:26-28, Psalms 100:3, John 21:15-17, Romans 12:5, Ephesians 1:22-23].

“The communion of saints”: [Hebrews 12:22-23, Revelation 5:8, Ephesians 3:8, Ephesians 2:19, Ephesians 3:18, Revelation 18:20, 1 Corinthians 6:2, Revelation 14:4-5; 20:9; 5:8; 17:6; 12:11; 14:12; 7:9; 7:14-15; 6:9-11; 14:13; 15:2-3; 20:4].

“The forgiveness of sins”: [Ephesians 1:7, Exodus 29:14; 34:7; 34:9, Leviticus 1:4; 4:20; 5:13, 2 Samuel 12:13, 1 Kings 8:34, Psalms 32:1; 32:5; 51:1; 103:12, Proverbs 16:6, Isaiah 1:18; 6:7; 27:9; 38:17; 44:22, Ezekiel 45:13-15, Daniel 9:24, Matthew 6:12; 9:2; 9:6; 26:28, Mark 1:4; 2:5, Luke 5:20, Acts 2:38; 10:43; 15:9, John 20:23].

“The Resurrection of the body”: [Isaiah 26:19, Daniel 12:2; 12:13, John 11:25, Matthew 16:21; 20:19, John 11:43-44, Luke 24:6-7; 20:35; 16:22; 8:54-55, 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; 15:20; 15:21; 15:22; 15:42; 15:51-52, Colossians 2:12, John 5:28-29, Philippians 3:11, 1 Thessalonians 4:16].

“Life everlasting”: [Genesis 3:22, Psalms 118:17, Daniel 12:2, Amos 5:4; 5:6, Matthew 19:16; 19:29, Mark 10:30; 12:27, Luke 18:29-30, John 3:14-15; 3:16; 3:36; 5:24; 6:68; 8:51; 10:10; 11:26; Acts 13:46, Romans 1:17; 5:21; 6:22-23, 1 Corinthians 15:53, 2 Corinthians 3:16, Galatians 6:8, Colossians 2:13, 1 Thessalonians 4:17, 1 Timothy 1:16; 6:12, 2 Timothy 1:10; 2:11, Titus 1:1-2; 3:7, James 1:12, 1 John 1:2; 2:17; 2:25; 4:9; 5:11; 5:13; 5:20, Jude 1:21; Revelation 2:10].

The Our Father (The Lord’s prayer): [Matthew 6:9-13, Luke 11:2-4].

The Hail Mary

“Hail Mary full of grace, The Lord is with you”: [Luke 1:28].

“Blessed are you among women and blessed is the Fruit of your womb, Jesus”: [Luke 1:41-42].

“Holy Mary”: [Luke 1:35; 1:41-42; 1:43, Matthew 12:33].

“Mother of God”: [Matthew 1:23, Luke 1:43, Isaiah 7:14, John 1:1; 1:14; 13:19; 1:18].

“Pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death”: [James 5:16, 2:3, 1 John 1:8, Matthew 6:12, Luke 11:4].

The Glory Be;

“Glory be to The Father, and to The Son, and to The Holy Spirit”: [Psalms 115:1; 19:1, Genesis 1:1-3, Deuteronomy 5:24, Isaiah 42:8, Daniel 4:34, Matthew 3:16-17, Luke 2:14, John 1:14; 11:4, Romans 16:25; 16:27, 1 Corinthians 6:20, Galatians 1:5, Philippians 4:20, 2 Peter 1:17; 3:18, Jude 1:25, Revelation 1:6; 5:13; 7:11-12; 19:1].

“As it was, in the beginning, is now and ever shall be”: [Genesis 1:1-3, John 1:1-4; 1:14, Hebrews 13:8, Revelation 21:6].

“World without end”: [Psalms 133:3, John 10:28; 6:68, Jude 1:21, Revelation 22:1-5].

THE MYSTERIES OF THE HOLY ROSARY

Mystery in this context, implies a truth of the faith.

THE JOYFUL MYSTERIES (*OBSERVED ON MONDAYS AND SATURDAYS*)

THE ANNUNCIATION [Luke 1:26-38]

THE VISITATION [Luke 1:40-56]

THE NATIVITY [Luke 2:6-20]

THE PRESENTATION OF JESUS IN THE TEMPLE [Luke 2:21-39]

THE FINDING OF THE CHILD JESUS IN THE TEMPLE [Luke 2:41-51]

THE MYSTERIES OF LIGHT (*OBSERVED ON THURSDAYS*)

CHRIST’S BAPTISM IN THE JORDAN [Matthew 3:13-17, Mark 1:9-11, Luke 3:21-22]

CHRIST’S SELF-REVELATION AT THE MARRIAGE AT CANA [John 2:1-12]

CHRIST’S PROCLAMATION OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD WITH HIS CALL TO CONVERSION [Mark 1:14-20, Matthew 4:12-22, Luke 4:14-15; 5:1-11]

CHRIST’S TRANSFIGURATION [Matthew 17:1-13, Mark 9:2-13, Luke 9:28-36]

CHRIST’S INSTITUTION OF THE EUCHARIST [Luke 22:14-23, Matthew 26:26-30, Mark 14:22-26, 1 Corinthians 11:23-25]

THE SORROWFUL MYSTERIES (*OBSERVED ON TUESDAYS AND FRIDAYS*)

THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN [Matthew 26:36-46, Mark 14:32-42, Luke 22:39-46]

THE SCOURGING [Matthew 27:26, Mark 15:15, Luke 23:16, John 19:1]

THE CROWNING WITH THORNS [Matthew 27:29, Mark 15:17, John 19:2]

THE CARRYING OF THE CROSS [John 19:17]

THE CRUCIFIXION [Luke 23:33-46, Matthew 27:34-44, Mark 15:23-32, John 19:17-27]

THE GLORIOUS MYSTERIES (*OBSERVED ON WEDNESDAYS AND SUNDAYS*)

THE RESURRECTION [Luke 24:1-12, Matthew 28:1-10, Mark 16:1-10, John 20:1-10]

THE ASCENSION [Luke 24:50-51, Mark 16:19-20, Acts 1:9-11]

THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT [Acts 2:1-4]

THE ASSUMPTION OF MARY INTO HEAVEN [Revelation 12:1-9]

THE CORONATION [Revelation 12:1]

THE HAIL, HOLY QUEEN

“Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy”: [Luke 1:28; 1:41-42; 1:35; 1:43, Isaiah 7:14, John 1:1; 1:14; 13:19; 1:18, Matthew 1:23].

“Hail our life, our sweetness and our Hope”: [John 14:6; 11:25, 1 Peter 1:3, Romans 8:24, Ephesians 4:4, Colossians 1:23; 3:4]

“To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve”: [Exodus 32:10-14, Genesis 3:22-23, Acts 9:10-12; 9:17-18, John 19:26-27].

“To thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears”: [James 5:16, John 2:3; 19:26-27, Genesis 18:29-30].

“Turn then, O most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy towards us and after this our exile show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus”: [John 2:3; 19:26-27, 1 Peter 2:11, Psalms 90:3; 90:12, Luke 1:42].

“O clement, O loving, O sweet virgin Mary”: [Luke 1:26-38, John 19:26-27]





THE GAMBIA: A Pathway to becoming one of Africa's most developed countries

INTRODUCTION

The Gambia, the smallest country on mainland Africa, holds immense potential to become one of the continent's most developed nations. Despite its small size, The Gambia is rich in natural resources, cultural heritage, and strategic location. To transform its potential into reality, The Gambia needs to adopt a comprehensive development strategy that leverages its unique strengths while addressing its challenges. This article explores the key areas that can propel The Gambia towards rapid and sustainable development.

LEVERAGING NATURAL RESOURCES

Agricultural Development

The Gambia's economy is heavily reliant on agriculture, which employs about 70% of the population. To harness this sector's full potential, The Gambia can:

1. Invest in Modern Farming Techniques: Adoption of modern farming methods, including mechanization, irrigation, and the use of high-yield crop varieties, can significantly boost agricultural productivity.

2. Enhance Value Addition: Developing agro-processing industries to add value to raw agricultural products can increase export revenues and create jobs. For instance, processing groundnuts into oil and other products can fetch higher prices on international markets.

Promote Sustainable Practices: Implementing sustainable farming practices to combat soil degradation and deforestation will ensure long-term agricultural productivity. Programs to educate farmers on crop rotation, organic farming, and efficient water use are essential.

TOURISM

Tourism is another vital sector for The Gambia, often referred to as "The Smiling Coast of Africa." To maximize its tourism potential:

1. Diversify Tourism Offerings: Beyond the beautiful beaches, The Gambia can promote eco-tourism, cultural tourism, and adventure tourism. Highlighting attractions such as national parks, birdwatching sites, and historical landmarks can attract a broader range of tourists.

2. Improve Infrastructure: Upgrading transportation, communication, and hospitality infrastructure is crucial. Better roads, reliable internet connectivity, and modern accommodations will enhance the tourist experience and encourage repeat visits.

Marketing and Promotion: Effective marketing campaigns targeting key tourist markets, particularly in Europe and North America, can increase tourist arrivals. Collaborations with international travel agencies and participation in global tourism fairs can boost visibility.

STRENGTHENING HUMAN CAPITAL

Education

Investing in education is fundamental for long-term development. The Gambia should focus on:

1. Universal Access to Quality Education: Ensuring that every child has access to quality primary and secondary education is critical. This includes building more schools, providing adequate learning materials, and training teachers.

2. Technical and Vocational Training: Developing technical and vocational education and training (TVET) programs can equip young Gambians with practical skills needed in various industries. This will reduce unemployment and foster entrepreneurship.

Higher Education and Research: Supporting higher education institutions and encouraging research and innovation can drive development. Partnerships with international universities and research institutions can bring in expertise and resources.

HEALTHCARE

A healthy population is essential for economic growth. The Gambia can improve its healthcare system by:

1. Expanding Healthcare Infrastructure: Building more hospitals and clinics, especially in rural areas, will increase access to healthcare services. Equipping these facilities with modern medical equipment is also necessary.

2. Training Healthcare Professionals: Investing in the training of doctors, nurses, and other healthcare workers will address the shortage of qualified personnel. Scholarships and exchange programs can enhance their skills.

Public Health Initiatives: Implementing public health programs to address common health issues such as malaria, maternal and child health, and nutrition can improve overall health outcomes. Awareness campaigns and preventive measures are crucial.

ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION AND INDUSTRIALIZATION

Promoting Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)
SMEs are the backbone of any economy. The Gambia can stimulate SME growth by:

1. Access to Finance: Creating financial instruments such as microloans, grants, and venture capital funds can help entrepreneurs start and expand their businesses.

2. Business Development Services: Providing training and mentorship programs can improve the management and operational skills of SME owners.

Market Access: Facilitating access to local, regional, and international markets through trade fairs, online platforms, and export incentives can help SMEs grow.

Industrialization

Industrial development can significantly contribute to economic growth. The Gambia should focus on:

1. Developing Industrial Zones: Establishing industrial zones with the necessary infrastructure and incentives can attract both local and foreign investors.

2. Fostering Manufacturing: Encouraging the development of manufacturing industries, such as textiles, food processing, and light manufacturing, can create jobs

and reduce reliance on imports.

Encouraging Innovation: Supporting research and development in industrial processes and technologies can enhance competitiveness and productivity.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Strengthening Institutions

Effective institutions are crucial for sustainable development. The Gambia should work on:

1. Good Governance: Promoting transparency, accountability, and the rule of law will create a conducive environment for development. Strengthening anti-corruption measures is also vital.

2. Public Sector Reforms: Implementing reforms to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public services

can enhance service delivery and economic management.

Decentralization: Empowering local governments to manage resources and make decisions can improve governance and development outcomes at the grassroots level.

CONCLUSION

The Gambia's journey towards becoming one of Africa's most developed countries requires a multifaceted approach that leverages its natural resources, strengthens human capital, diversifies the economy, and enhances governance. By focusing on these key areas, The Gambia can overcome its challenges and unlock its full potential. The commitment of the government, private sector, and international partners will be essential in achieving this vision. With strategic planning and sustained effort, The Gambia can transform itself into a model of development on the African continent.

Daily Mass Readings

October & November



1st October, 2024

Thérèse of Lisieux, Virgin, Religious, Doctor ,
Obligatory Memorial

First Reading: [Job 3](#): 1-3, 11-17, 20-23

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 88](#): 2-3, 4-5, 6, 7-8

Alleluia: [Mark 10](#): 45

Gospel: [Luke 9](#): 51-56

2nd October, 2024

The Guardian Angels, Obligatory Memorial

First Reading: [Job 9](#): 1-12, 14-16

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 88](#): 10bc-11, 12-13, 14-15

Alleluia: [Psalms 103](#): 21

Gospel: [Matthew 18](#): 1-5, 10

3rd October, 2024

Ordinary Weekday

First Reading: [Job 19](#): 21-27

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 27](#): 7-8a, 8b-9abc, 13-14

Alleluia: [Mark 1](#): 15

Gospel: [Luke 10](#): 1-12

4th October, 2024

Francis of Assisi, Religious Founder, Obligatory Memorial

First Reading: [Job 38](#): 1, 12-21; 40: 3-5

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 139](#): 1-3, 7-8, 9-10, 13-14ab

Alleluia: [Psalms 95](#): 8

Gospel: [Luke 10](#): 13-16

5th October, 2024

Ordinary Weekday/ Optional Memorial of the Blessed
Virgin Mary

First Reading: [Job 42](#): 1-3, 5-6, 12-17

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 119](#): 66, 71, 75, 91, 125, 130

Alleluia: [Matthew 11](#): 25

Gospel: [Luke 10](#): 17-24

6th October, 2024

Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: [Genesis 2](#): 18-24

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 128](#): 1-2, 3, 4-5, 6

Second Reading: [Hebrews 2](#): 9-11

Alleluia: [First John 4](#): 12

Gospel: [Mark 10](#): 2-16

7th October, 2024

Our Lady of the Rosary, Obligatory Memorial

First Reading: [Galatians 1](#): 6-12

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 111](#): 1b-2, 7-8, 9 and 10c

Alleluia: [John 13](#): 34

Gospel: [Luke 10](#): 25-37

8th October, 2024

Ordinary Weekday

First Reading: [Galatians 1](#): 13-24

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 139](#): 1b-3, 13-14ab, 14c-15

Alleluia: [Luke 11](#): 28

Gospel: [Luke 10](#): 38-42

9th October, 2024

Ordinary Weekday/ Denis, Bishop, Martyr, &
Companions, Martyrs/ John Leonardi, Priest

First Reading: [Galatians 2](#): 1-2, 7-14

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 117](#): 1bc, 2

Alleluia: [Romans 8](#): 15bc

Gospel: [Luke 11](#): 1-4

10th October, 2024

Ordinary Weekday

First Reading: [Galatians 3](#): 1-5

Responsorial Psalm: [Luke 1](#): 69, 70-71, 72, 73-75

Alleluia: [Acts 16](#): 14b Gospel: [Luke 11](#): 5-13

11th October, 2024

Ordinary Weekday

First Reading: [Galatians 3](#): 7-14

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 111](#): 1b-2, 3-4, 5-6

Alleluia: [John 12](#): 31b-32 Gospel: [Luke 11](#): 15-26

12th October, 2024

Ordinary Weekday/ Optional Memorial of the Blessed
Virgin Mary

First Reading: [Galatians 3](#): 22-29

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 105](#): 2-3, 4-5, 6-7

Alleluia: [Luke 11](#): 28 Gospel: [Luke 11](#): 27-28

13th October, 2024

Twenty-Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: [Wisdom 7](#): 7-11

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 90](#): 12-13, 14-15, 16-17

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Second Reading: [Hebrews 4](#): 12-13
Alleluia: [Matthew 5](#): 3
Gospel: [Mark 10](#): 17-30

14th October, 2024

Ordinary Weekday/ Callistus I, Pope, Martyr
First Reading: [Galatians 4](#): 22-24, 26-27, 31 – 5: 1
Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 113](#): 1b-2, 3-4, 5a and 6-7
Alleluia: [Psalm 95](#): 8
Gospel: [Luke 11](#): 29-32

15th October, 2024

Teresa of Avila, Virgin, Religious, Doctor Obligatory Memorial
First Reading: [Galatians 5](#): 1-6
Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 119](#): 41, 43, 44, 45, 47, 48
Alleluia: [Hebrews 4](#): 12
Gospel: [Luke 11](#): 37-41

16th October, 2024

Ordinary Weekday/ Hedwig, Religious/ Margaret Mary Alacoque, Virgin
First Reading: [Galatians 5](#): 18-25
Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 1](#): 1-2, 3, 4 and 6
Alleluia: [John 10](#): 27
Gospel: [Luke 11](#): 42-46

17th October, 2024

Ignatius of Antioch, Bishop, Martyr Obligatory Memorial
First Reading: [Ephesians 1](#): 1-10
Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 98](#): 1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4, 5-6
Alleluia: [John 14](#): 6
Gospel: [Luke 11](#): 47-54

18th October, 2024

Luke, Evangelist Feast
First Reading: [Second Timothy 4](#): 10-17b
Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 145](#): 10-11, 12-13, 17-18
Alleluia: [John 15](#): 16
Gospel: [Luke 10](#): 1-9

19th October, 2024

Isaac Jogues and John De Brébeuf, Priests, Religious, Missionaries, Martyrs, & Companions, Martyrs Obligatory Memorial
First Reading: [Ephesians 1](#): 15-23
Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 8](#): 2-3ab, 4-5, 6-7
Alleluia: [John 15](#): 26a, 27a
Gospel: [Luke 12](#): 8-12

20th October, 2024

Twenty-Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time
First Reading: [Isaiah 53](#): 10-11
Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 33](#): 4-5, 18-19, 20, 22
Second Reading: [Hebrews 4](#): 14-16
Alleluia: [Mark 10](#): 45
Gospel: [Mark 10](#): 35-45 or [Mark 10](#): 42-45

21st October, 2024

Ordinary Weekday
First Reading: [Ephesians 2](#): 1-10
Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 100](#): 2, 3, 4ab, 4c-5
Alleluia: [Matthew 5](#): 3
Gospel: [Luke 12](#): 13-21

22nd October, 2024

Ordinary Weekday/ John Paul II, Pope
First Reading: [Ephesians 2](#): 12-22

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 85](#): 9ab-10, 11-12, 13-14
Alleluia: [Luke 21](#): 36
Gospel: [Luke 12](#): 35-38

23rd October, 2024

Ordinary Weekday/ John of Capistrano, Priest
First Reading: [Ephesians 3](#): 2-12
Responsorial Psalm: [Isaiah 12](#): 2-3, 4bcd, 5-6
Alleluia: [Matthew 24](#): 42a, 44
Gospel: [Luke 12](#): 39-48

24th October, 2024

Ordinary Weekday/ Anthony Mary Claret, Bishop, Religious Founder
First Reading: [Ephesians 3](#): 14-21
Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 33](#): 1-2, 4-5, 11-12, 18-19
Alleluia: [Philippians 3](#): 8-9
Gospel: [Luke 12](#): 49-53

25th October, 2024

Ordinary Weekday
First Reading: [Ephesians 4](#): 1-6
Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 24](#): 1-2, 3-4ab, 5-6
Alleluia: [Matthew 11](#): 25
Gospel: [Luke 12](#): 54-59

26th October, 2024

Ordinary Weekday/ Optional Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary
First Reading: [Ephesians 4](#): 7-16
Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 122](#): 1-2, 3-4ab, 4cd-5
Alleluia: [Ezekiel 33](#): 11
Gospel: [Luke 13](#): 1-9

27th October, 2024

Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time
First Reading: [Jeremiah 31](#): 7-9
Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 126](#): 1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6
Second Reading: [Hebrews 5](#): 1-6
Alleluia: [Second Timothy 1](#): 10
Gospel: [Mark 10](#): 46-52

28th October, 2024

Simon and Jude, Apostles Feast
First Reading: [Ephesians 2](#): 19-22
Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 19](#): 2-3, 4-5
Gospel: [Luke 6](#): 12-16

29th October, 2024

Ordinary Weekday
First Reading: [Ephesians 5](#): 21-33
Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 128](#): 1-2, 3, 4-5
Alleluia: [Matthew 11](#): 25
Gospel: [Luke 13](#): 18-21

30th October, 2024

Ordinary Weekday
First Reading: [Ephesians 6](#): 1-9
Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 145](#): 10-11, 12-13ab, 13cd-14
Alleluia: [Second Thessalonians 2](#): 14
Gospel: [Luke 13](#): 22-30

31st October, 2024

Ordinary Weekday
First Reading: [Ephesians 6](#): 10-20
Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 144](#): 1b, 2, 9-10
Alleluia: [Luke 19](#): 38; 2:14
Gospel: [Luke 13](#): 31-35

1st November, 2024

All Saints Solemnity
 First Reading: [Revelation 7](#): 2-4, 9-14
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 24](#): 1b-2, 3-4ab, 5-6
 Second Reading: [First John 3](#): 1-3
 Alleluia: [Matthew 11](#): 28
 Gospel: [Matthew 5](#): 1-12a

2nd November, 2024

The Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed (All Souls)
 First Reading: [Wisdom 3](#): 1-9
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 23](#): 1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6
 Second Reading: [Romans 5](#): 5-11
 Alleluia: [Matthew 25](#): 34
 Gospel: [John 6](#): 37-40

3rd November, 2024

Thirty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time
 First Reading: [Deuteronomy 6](#): 2-6
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 18](#): 2-3, 3-4, 47, 51
 Second Reading: [Hebrews 7](#): 23-28
 Alleluia: [John 14](#): 23
 Gospel: [Mark 12](#): 28b-34

4th November, 2024

Charles Borromeo, Bishop Obligatory Memorial
 First Reading: [Philippians 2](#): 1-4
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 131](#): 1bcde, 2, 3
 Alleluia: [John 8](#): 31b-32
 Gospel: [Luke 14](#): 12-14

5th November, 2024

Ordinary Weekday
 First Reading: [Philippians 2](#): 5-11
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 22](#): 26b-27, 28, 29-30, 31-32
 Alleluia: [Matthew 11](#): 28
 Gospel: [Luke 14](#): 15-24

6th November, 2024

Ordinary Weekday
 First Reading: [Philippians 2](#): 12-18
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 27](#): 1, 4, 13-14
 Alleluia: [First Peter 4](#): 14
 Gospel: [Luke 14](#): 25-33

7th November, 2024

Ordinary Weekday
 First Reading: [Philippians 3](#): 3-8a
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 105](#): 2-3, 4-5, 6-7
 Alleluia: [Matthew 11](#): 28
 Gospel: [Luke 15](#): 1-10

8th November, 2024

Ordinary Weekday
 First Reading: [Philippians 3](#): 17 – 4: 1
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 122](#): 1-2, 3-4ab, 4cd-5
 Alleluia: [First John 2](#): 5
 Gospel: [Luke 16](#): 1-8

9th November, 2024

Dedication of the Lateran Basilica in Rome Feast
 First Reading: [Ezekiel 47](#): 1-2, 8-9, 12
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 46](#): 2-3, 5-6, 8-9
 Second Reading: [First Corinthians 3](#): 9c-11, 16-17
 Alleluia: [Second Chronicles 7](#): 16
 Gospel: [John 2](#): 13-22

10th November, 2024

Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time
 First Reading: [First Kings 17](#): 10-16
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 146](#): 7, 8-9, 9-10
 Second Reading: [Hebrews 9](#): 24-28
 Alleluia: [Matthew 5](#): 3
 Gospel: [Mark 12](#): 38-44 or [Mark 12](#): 41-44

11th November, 2024

Martin of Tours, Bishop Obligatory Memorial
 First Reading: [Titus 1](#): 1-9
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 24](#): 1b-2, 3-4ab, 5-6
 Alleluia: [Philippians 2](#): 15d, 16a
 Gospel: [Luke 17](#): 1-6

12th November, 2024

Josaphat, Bishop, Religious, Martyr Obligatory Memorial
 First Reading: [Titus 2](#): 1-8, 11-14
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 37](#): 3-4, 18 and 23, 27 and 29
 Alleluia: [John 14](#): 23
 Gospel: [Luke 17](#): 7-10

13th November, 2024

Frances Xavier Cabrini, Virgin, Religious Obligatory Memorial
 First Reading: [Titus 3](#): 1-7
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 23](#): 1b-3a, 3bc-4, 5, 6
 Alleluia: [First Thessalonians 5](#): 18
 Gospel: [Luke 17](#): 11-19

14th November, 2024

Ordinary Weekday
 First Reading: [Philemon 1](#): 7-20
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 146](#): 7, 8-9a, 9bc-10
 Alleluia: [John 15](#): 5
 Gospel: [Luke 17](#): 20-25

15th November, 2024

Ordinary Weekday/ Albert the Great, Bishop, Religious, Doctor
 First Reading: [Second John 1](#): 4-9
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 119](#): 1, 2, 10, 11, 17, 18
 Alleluia: [Luke 21](#): 28
 Gospel: [Luke 17](#): 26-37

16th November, 2024

Ordinary Weekday/ Optional Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary/ Margaret of Scotland, Married Woman/ Gertrude the Great, Virgin, Religious
 First Reading: [Third John 1](#): 5-8
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 112](#): 1-2, 3-4, 5-6
 Alleluia: [Second Thessalonians 2](#): 14
 Gospel: [Luke 18](#): 1-8

17th November, 2024

Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time
 First Reading: [Daniel 12](#): 1-3
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 16](#): 5, 8, 9-10, 11
 Second Reading: [Hebrews 10](#): 11-14, 18
 Alleluia: [Luke 21](#): 36
 Gospel: [Mark 13](#): 24-32

18th November, 2024

Ordinary Weekday/ Dedication of the Churches of Peter and Paul/ Rose Philippine Duchesne, Virgin, Religious, Missionary/ Ordinary
 First Reading: [Revelation 1](#): 1-4; 2: 1-5

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Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 1](#): 1-2, 3, 4 and 6

Alleluia: [John 8](#): 12

Gospel: [Luke 18](#): 35-43

18th November, 2024 – Proper

Ordinary Weekday/ Dedication of the Churches of Peter and Paul/ Rose Philippine Duchesne, Virgin, Religious, Missionary/ Proper

First Reading: [Acts 28](#): 11-16, 30-31

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 98](#): 1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4, 5-6

Gospel: [Matthew 14](#): 22-33

19th November, 2024

Ordinary Weekday

First Reading: [Revelation 3](#): 1-6, 14-22

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 15](#): 2-3a, 3bc-4ab, 5

Alleluia: [First John 4](#): 10b

Gospel: [Luke 19](#): 1-10

20th November, 2024

Ordinary Weekday

First Reading: [Revelation 4](#): 1-11

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 150](#): 1b-2, 3-4, 5-6

Alleluia: [John 15](#): 16

Gospel: [Luke 19](#): 11-28

21st November, 2024

Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Obligatory Memorial

First Reading: [Revelation 5](#): 1-10

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 149](#): 1b-2, 3-4, 5-6a and 9b

Alleluia: [Psalm 95](#): 8

Gospel: [Luke 19](#): 41-44

22nd November, 2024

Cecilia, Virgin, Martyr Obligatory Memorial

First Reading: [Revelation 10](#): 8-11

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 119](#): 14, 24, 72, 103, 111, 131

Alleluia: [John 10](#): 27

Gospel: [Luke 19](#): 45-48

23rd November, 2024

Ordinary Weekday/ Optional Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary/ Clement I, Pope, Martyr/ Columban, Abbot, Missionary/ Blessed Miguel Agustín Pro, Priest, Religious, Martyr

First Reading: [Revelation 11](#): 4-12

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 144](#): 1, 2, 9-10

Alleluia: [Second Timothy 1](#): 10

Gospel: [Luke 20](#): 27-40

24th November, 2024

Christ the King Solemnity(Thirty-Fourth and Last Sunday in Ordinary Time)

First Reading: [Daniel 7](#): 13-14

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 93](#): 1abc, 1d-2, 5

Second Reading: [Revelation 1](#): 5-8

Alleluia: [Mark 11](#): 9, 10

Gospel: [John 18](#): 33b-37

25th November, 2024

Ordinary Weekday/ Catherine of Alexandria, Virgin, Martyr

First Reading: [Revelation 14](#): 1-3, 4b-5

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 24](#): 1bc-2, 3-4ab, 5-6

Alleluia: [Matthew 24](#): 42a, 44

Gospel: [Luke 21](#): 1-4

26th November, 2024

Ordinary Weekday

First Reading: [Revelation 14](#): 14-19

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 96](#): 10, 11-12, 13

Alleluia: [Revelation 2](#): 10c

Gospel: [Luke 21](#): 5-11

27th November, 2024

Ordinary Weekday

First Reading: [Revelation 15](#): 1-4

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 98](#): 1, 2-3ab, 7-8, 9

Alleluia: [Revelation 2](#): 10c

Gospel: [Luke 21](#): 12-19

28th November, 2024 – Ordinary

Ordinary Weekday / Thanksgiving Day/ Ordinary

First Reading: [Revelation 18](#): 1-2, 21-23; 19: 1-3, 9a

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 100](#): 2, 3, 4, 5

Alleluia: [Luke 21](#): 28

Gospel: [Luke 21](#): 20-28

28th November, 2024 – Proper

Ordinary Weekday / Thanksgiving Day/ Proper

First Reading: [Sirach 50](#): 22-24

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 145](#): 2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9, 10-11

Second Reading: [First Corinthians 1](#): 3-9

Alleluia: [First Thessalonians 5](#): 18

Gospel: [Luke 17](#): 11-19

29th November, 2024

Ordinary Weekday

First Reading: [Revelation 20](#): 1-4, 11-21: 2

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 84](#): 3, 4, 5-6a and 8a

Alleluia: [Luke 21](#): 28

Gospel: [Luke 21](#): 29-33

30th November, 2024

Andrew, Apostle Feast

First Reading: [Romans 10](#): 9-18

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalm 19](#): 8, 9, 10, 11

Alleluia: [Matthew 4](#): 19

Gospel: [Matthew 4](#): 18-22

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October & November

Gambian Christian



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

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

26th October, 1905: Arrival of Fr. John Meehan, ordained in Paris the previous year.

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

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

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

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

10th October, 1945: Arrival of Fr. James White, who died in The Gambia in February 1996.

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

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

16th October, 1952: Arrival of Fr. William Costelloe and Fr. Reginald Gillooly.

26th October, 1958: Enthronement of Bishop Moloney as first Bishop of Banjul, at Hagan Street Church, becoming his Cathedral.

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

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

20th October, 1965: Arrival of Fr. John Sharpe.

3rd October, 1967: Arrival of Fr. Michael Casey, who retired from service in The Gambia after 47 years' service.

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

12th November, 1968: Arrival of Br. Liam Sheridan and Br. Benedict Stapleton to begin Lamin Technical School.

27th October, 1970: Arrival of Fr. Robert Ellison (who later became the Bishop of Banjul).

11th October, 1972: Fr. Sharpe moved to Kunkujang to found a mission station.

12th November, 1972: Bishop Moloney blessed the Junior Seminary at Fajara. The first Director was Fr. Pierre Sagna (later, Bishop Sagna). Among the 19 seminarians were Fr. Anthony Gabasi and Fr. Peter Gomez (deceased).

4th November, 1976: First meeting of all Mission personnel to work out a pastoral plan for the diocese.

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

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

23rd November, 1983: Sudden death in Ireland of Fr. Francis Farrell.

18th November, 1999: Funeral in Banjul of Tony

Blain, former Director of Education, who had died in the USA.

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

13th November, 2000: Death of Rachel Palmer, former Head of the School of Nursing, Banjul.

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

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

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

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

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

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

21st November, 2008: At Farafenni, Bishop Ellison ordained Fr. John Mendy.

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

14th November, 2009: At Brikama, Bishop Ellison ordained Fr. Yenes Manneh.

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

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

25th November, 2009: Death of Marcel Jinage Badji, aged 58, Director of St. Joseph's Family Farm, Bwiam.

1st – 10th October, 2010: Sr. Calixte Thomas, Sr. Josephine Kamada, Sr. Teresa Mindow and Sr. Jeanne-Therese Ndeye joined Cluny Sisters from all over Africa at a synod in Dakar.

15th November, 2010: Simon Suta Mendy became Catechist Co-ordinator at GPI.

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

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

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

9th November, 2013: At Brikama, Bishop Ellison

ordained Fr. Victor Ndecky.

1st October, 2016: Ellen B. Mendy and Harriet B. Mendy made their first vows as novices of the Presentation of Mary.

19th October, 2016: At Bakau Stadium, the Gambian Christian Council held an ecumenical gathering to pray for the peace, human rights, security and religious freedom, especially for Christians, in The Gambia.

7th October, 2017: Dawida Krzempek of the School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND) celebrated the Silver Jubilee of her religious profession, having spent 17 of her 25 years as religious sister in The Gambia.

5th October, 2018: Three priests of the Salesians of St. John Bosco took up ministry at Kunkujang-Mariama.

2nd November, 2018: The Dutchess of Cornwall, wife of the Prince of Wales, visited St. Therese's Upper Basic School, Kanifing.

5th November, 2018: At Jaama Hall, the choir of St. Peter's, Lamin staged a Silver Jubilee Concert.

9th November, 2018: Crowds of Christians and Muslims welcomed Bishop Gabriel Mendy when he paid his first visit to Basse. He also confirmed 17 young Catholics.

19th November, 2018: Bishop Mendy hosted a dinner at GPI for Archbishop Dagoberto Campos-Salas, Apostolic Nuncio to The Gambia.

2nd October, 2021: Ordination of Rev. Fr. John Nicolas Correa at the St. Kizito's Parish, Bakoteh.

6th - 9th October, 2023: The Legion of Mary (*Lay apostolic association of Catholics*), travelled to Popenguine, Senegal for a prayer weekend.

27th October, 2023: St. Therese senior choir celebrated their 75th anniversary by staging a musical concert at the Pencha Mi hall Paradise Suites Hotel.

Weekday Celebrations

October & November



SAINTS



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

Therese was born to devout parents in 1873 in Alençon, France, youngest of nine children. When she was four, her mother died; and her father, a watch-maker, moved to Lisieux. Early on, she wanted to follow two of her sisters in the religious life, but was told she was too young. She persisted, and in 1888 was admitted as a Carmelite nun. Therese is known for her 'Little Way', which asserts that it is not necessary to achieve 'great deeds' to become holy. 'I see that it is enough to realise one's nothingness and give oneself wholly, like a child, into the arms of the loving God.' Therese suffered from tuberculosis, and died aged only 24 on 30th September, 1897. Her autobiography, *L'histoire d'une âme* ('The story of a soul') was edited by her sister Pauline and published after Therese's death. It became a best-seller. Therese was canonised in 1925. The Gambia's largest church is dedicated to St. Therese. In this diocese, we pray, especially today, for the priests and people of the parish of St. Therese, Kanifing.

October 4th: St. Francis of Assisi, *religious*

St. Francis is one of the best-loved saints. He was born into a wealthy family in Assisi, Italy, around 1181. In his early 20s, after being a soldier and a prisoner of war, he experienced conversion. Francis sold all his possessions, gave the proceeds to the Church, and began a life of poverty. In 1209, Pope Innocent III approved the formation of the Franciscan Order, which stressed the need to imitate the life of Christ. Francis viewed nature as a mirror of God, calling all creatures his brothers and sisters. In 1209, he approved the formation of a women's order (the Poor Clares). In 1219, Francis visited Egypt and the Holy Land. In 1224, after a vision, he became the first person to receive the stigmata. Francis helped to restore popular faith in a Church, which had been corrupted by wealth and political

aspirations. He died in October, 1226 and was canonised in 1228.

October 7th: Our Lady of the Rosary

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

October 9th: Blessed John Henry Newman

John Henry Newman (1801-1890), was an Anglican priest who became a leader of the Oxford Movement, a group of Anglicans who wished to return the Church of England to Catholic beliefs and forms of worship. In 1845 Newman left the Church of England and was received into the Roman Catholic Church, where he was eventually made a Cardinal by Pope Leo XIII. Newman was instrumental in founding the Catholic University of Ireland, which evolved into University College, Dublin, today the largest university in Ireland. Newman's beatification was proclaimed by Pope Benedict XVI in September 2010, during his visit to the United Kingdom. Newman's writings include his autobiography 'Apologia Pro Vita Sua (1865-66)'. He wrote the popular hymns 'Lead, Kindly Light' and 'Praise to the Holiest in the Height'. Newman is the patron of the English Ordinariate, set up by Benedict XVI for former Anglicans, who are in full communion with Rome, while retaining some Anglican forms of worship.

October 13th: St. Edward, *king and confessor*

Edward (1404-1466) was the last of the Anglo-Saxon kings of England, renowned for second-sight, curing scrofula and generosity to the poor. He founded Westminster Abbey, the best-known church in England.

The title 'confessor' is given to an outstanding witness to the Gospel. It was conferred on Edward in his lifetime by Pope Alexander II. Edward's tomb at Westminster Abbey was a place of pilgrimage until the Reformation, as it has become again in modern times. Pope Benedict XVI prayed there in September 2010, with the Archbishop of Canterbury. In this diocese, the school at Bwiam is named in St. Edward's honour, and today, we pray for past and present teachers and pupils of that school.

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

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

*Omnes sancti et sanctae Dei, intercedite pro nobis
(All holy men and women of God, intercede for us)*

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

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

October 18th: St. Luke evangelist

Luke was not an eye-witness of Christ's ministry, but accompanied St. Paul to Macedonia and Rome. Paul referred to Luke as 'the beloved physician'.

Luke's cultural background was Greek, and he was writing for Greeks. His Gospel account of Our Lord's ministry emphasises Jesus' compassion and his sympathy and openness towards women - who at that time were generally treated as inferior to men.

The Acts of the Apostles is a continuation of Luke's Gospel. It deals with events in the life of the early Church.

October 28th: St. Simon & St. Jude, apostles

Simon was born in Cana and was known as the

Zealot.

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

November 4th: St. Charles Borromeo, bishop

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

November 10th: St. Leo, the Great pope

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

November 21st: Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

We honour **Mary's** dedication of herself to God from her childhood by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who filled her with grace at prayers and work in The Gambia since 1964 of the Presentation Sisters.

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

Born in 1795, Andrew was a priest in Vietnam, his homeland. He was a Catholic convert ordained to the priesthood, and was arrested in 1839. He was one of 117 people martyred in Vietnam between 1820 and 1862. In June 19th, 1988 they were canonised by St. John Paul II.

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October & November

Saviour of the world, by Your Cross and Resurrection You have set us free.



Our Sunday Readings

6th October, 2024

13th October, 2024 -

Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

1st Reading: Genesis 2:18-24
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 128:1-2, 3, 4-5, 6
2nd Reading: Hebrews 2:9-11
Alleluia: 1 John 4:12
Gospel: Mark 10:2-16 or Mark 10:2-12

1st Reading: Wisdom 7:7-11
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 90:12-13, 14-15, 16-17
2nd Reading: Hebrews 4:12-13
Alleluia: Matthew 5:3
Gospel: Mark 10:17-30 or Mark 10:17-27

Homily Theme: What God Has Joined Together, Man Must Not Separate – Matthew 19:3-12, Mark 10:1-12

Homily Theme: Sell What You Have and Give to the Poor – Matthew 19:16-22, Luke 18:18-23, Mark 10:17-22

Verse of the Day Reflection: Today, Jesus teaches us about the importance of the institution of marriage. Marriage is one of the things that cause so much joy to some and so much pain to others. It is an institution that was blessed by God from the beginning of time. When God created Man, He gave him the strengths of man and when He created the woman, she was given her different strengths too. So, with each one’s strengths, God intended a man and a woman to come together and complement and supplement each other and make one very strong institution of a family. It is in this family that God intends to breed and rear His creation in the best way possible. When the father and mother are present in the family, the children tend to grow wholesomely with the best support.

Verse of the Day Reflection: The vocation in today’s reflection is a sign to all of us. True, Jesus does call some people to literally sell all their possessions and give them away. For those who answer this call, they discover great freedom in their detachment from all material belongings. But what about the rest of us? What is that radical interior calling given to us by our Lord? It’s a calling to spiritual poverty. By “spiritual poverty” we mean that each and every one of us is called to detach from the things of this world to the same extent as those called to literal poverty. The only difference is that one calling is both internal and external, and the other calling is only internal. But it must be just as radical. What does internal poverty look like? It is a Beatitude. “Blessed are the poor in spirit,” as St. Matthew says, and “Blessed are the poor,” as St. Luke says. Spiritual poverty means we discover the blessing of spiritual riches in our detachment from the material enticements of this age. No, material “things” are not evil. That’s why it’s fine to have personal possessions. But it is quite common for us to also have a strong attachment to the things of this world. Too often, we want more and more and fall into the trap of thinking that more “things” will make us happy. It’s not true and we know that deep down, but we still fall right into the trap of acting as if more money and possessions will satisfy. As an old Roman catechism puts it, “He who has money never has money enough.”

When Jesus says that the man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and become one flesh, He means that the institution of marriage is supposed to be in congruence all the time; it is supposed to work like the different organs in a human being. The husband and the wife are supposed to live in harmony, despite their different strengths and upbringing. Just the same way the head cannot function without the neck and the neck without the head, so is man and woman in the institution of marriage. Jesus rubber-stamps the fact that marriage is not an institution invented by man, but by God. So, when man and woman decide to get married, they have to first seek blessings from God and finally solemnize the marriage in the presence of the Lord, in the Church. Jesus also warns us that whatever God has put together in marriage, let no man or woman ruins. So, anybody who intends to deliberately and maliciously put asunder any lawful marriage union, then he/she will face the full wrath of God.

Reflect today, upon the clear calling you have received to live in this world without becoming attached to the things of this world. Possessions are only a means to the end of living a holy life and fulfilling your purpose in life. That will mean you have what you need, but it will also mean that you strive to avoid excess and, especially, avoid internal attachment to worldly possessions.

Prayer: Lord God, we are facing so many challenges in our marriages. The institution of marriage is being attacked from all corners by the forces of the evil one. Give us Your Grace and strength to overcome all these challenges and may our marriages stand. In Jesus’ Name, I Pray and believe. Jesus, I love you. Amen.

Prayer: Lord, I freely renounce all I have and own. I give it to You as a spiritual sacrifice. Receive all I have and help me to use it only in the way You so desire. In that detachment, may I discover the true riches You have for me. Jesus, I love You. Amen.

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20th October, 2024

Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

1st Reading: Isaiah 53:10-11
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 33:4-5, 18-19, 20, 22
2nd Reading: Hebrews 4:14-16
Alleluia: Mark 10:45
Gospel: Mark 10:35-45 or Mark 10:42-45

Homily Theme: Whoever Wishes to Be First Among You Shall Be Your Slave – Matthew 20:26-28, Mark 10:32-45

Verse of the Day Reflection: The mother of Apostles James and John approached Jesus to make a request that Jesus commands that her two sons sit, one at His right and the other at His left side in His Kingdom. But Jesus answers her that, whoever will get that privilege must earn it. To earn it, one must do the will of our Heavenly Father. Jesus says that His right and left side are prepared and reserved for those who will be chosen by our Heavenly Father and not for any other person. Now, Jesus gives us one of the ways of pleasing our Heavenly Father, so that we can deserve that coveted place in His Kingdom. That is, embracing servant-hood among ourselves. This means that, instead of sometimes demanding services from others, we should always offer the same services to them. It also means that God created us in order to serve others. God did not create us to be served.

When all of us fulfill the mandate we were created for, we will realize that it feels good, fulfilling and rewarding, when serving others, as opposed to, when we are being served. In the Kingdom of God, things are the opposite of what the evil world demands. In this world, whoever is great or is the master, is the one who is being served, but in the Kingdom of God, the opposite is true. Jesus knows the mandate given to Him by God very well. He says that God sent Him here on earth to serve us and give His life as a ransom for many. Now my brothers and sisters in Christ, do you know why God created you? Have you fathomed why God takes His precious time to sustain you here on earth? Do you know what mandate you have been given? Well, you can get the answers to these salient questions when you first, and foremost, know God, love Him, be ready to serve Him and, finally, praise and glorify Him forever. Let us today commit to serving God by serving others. Let us seek to become servants instead of masters, and through this, God may make us one of those who will sit on the right or the left side of Jesus in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, we would like to sit at Your right and left sides in Your Kingdom. Therefore help us and give us the strength to continue fulfilling our mandate given to us by our Heavenly Father. May we seek to serve others more than we seek to be served, as this is one of the sure ways of pleasing our Heavenly Father. Jesus, I love you. Amen.

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27th October, 2024

Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

1st Reading: Jeremiah 31:7-9
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 126:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6
2nd Reading: Hebrews 5:1-6
Alleluia: 2 Timothy 1:10

Gospel: Mark 10:46-52
Homily Theme: Jesus Heals Blind Bartimaeus – Mark 10:46-52, Luke 18:35-43

Verse of the Day Reflection: Good for him! Here was Bartimaeus, a blind beggar who was treated poorly by many. He was treated as if he were no good and a sinner. When he began to call out for mercy from Jesus, he was told to be silent by those around him. But what did the blind man do? Did he give in to their oppression and ridicule? Certainly, not! Instead, “He kept calling out all the more!” And Jesus took notice of his faith and healed him. There is a great lesson from this man’s life for us all. There are many things we will encounter in life that get us down, discourage us and tempt us to despair. There are many things that are oppressive to us and difficult for us to deal with. So, what should we do? Should we give in to the struggle and then retreat into a hole of self-pity? This blind man gives us the perfect witness of what we should do. When we feel oppressed, discouraged, frustrated, misunderstood, or the like, we need to use this as an opportunity to turn to Jesus with even greater passion and courage, calling upon His mercy. Difficulties in life can have one of two effects on us. Either they beat us down or they make us stronger. The way they make us stronger is by fostering within our souls an even greater trust in and dependence upon the mercy of God. Reflect, today, upon that which tempts you the most toward discouragement. What is it that feels oppressive to you and difficult to deal with? Use that struggle as an opportunity to cry out with even more passion and zeal for the mercy and grace of God.

Prayer: Lord, in my weakness and struggle, help me to turn to You with even more passion. Help me to rely upon You all the more in times of distress and frustration in life. May the wickedness and harshness of this world only strengthen my resolve to turn to You in all things. Jesus, I love You. Amen.

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3rd November, 2024

Thirty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

1st Reading: Deuteronomy 6:2-6
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 18:2-3, 3-4, 47, 51
2nd Reading: Hebrews 7:23-28
Alleluia: John 14:23
Gospel: Mark 12:28B-34

Homily Theme: Which is the Greatest Commandment? – Matthew 22:34-40, Mark 12:28-34

Verse of the Day Reflection: Well! Well! Well! Today we finally hear Jesus Christ telling us the two cardinal commandments that sum up all other constitutions, laws, Acts of Parliament, rules and regulations, terms and conditions, and all other guidelines that people put in place to govern themselves. The commandment of love is the most important in this world because the lack of it causes us to start writing other small earthly laws to micro-manage what would have been handled well by embracing love in the first place. All the evils of this world are brought about by a lack of love for God and our neighbours too. Earthly laws are enacted to prevent a person from hurting another person or the environment around them. If we love God, we would take care of the environment, and all that lives in

both the land and the sea, just as He commanded man during creation. If we love our neighbours, we won't hurt them physically, socially, emotionally, or psychologically. We would be living in perfect harmony, just the way God intended for us. But, because we do not have love in our hearts, everything else in us and around us falls apart. The two commandments are inseparable, forming the foundation of a genuine and transformative faith. The reflection on this Gospel passage challenges us to examine our own lives. Are we truly loving God with all aspects of our being? Do we extend that love to our neighbours, treating them with the same care and compassion we desire for ourselves? It calls us to move beyond mere adherence to religious rituals and legalistic interpretations of faith, urging us to embody a love that transforms hearts and communities.

As we ponder these words of Jesus, let us strive to live out the greatest commandment daily, recognizing that true discipleship involves a radical and selfless love that mirrors the boundless love of our Creator. Therefore, let us start loving the Lord our God with all our hearts, all our souls, and all our minds and loving our neighbours as ourselves, and we will start seeing the world around us changing for the better, with fewer crimes, murders, plunder of public resources, corruption and other evils brought about by lack of love.

Prayer: Lord God, we love You with all our hearts, mind, and soul. We ask You to give us the strength and will to continue loving our neighbours as ourselves, despite all the brutality, persecution, hatred, jealousy, and malice that we receive from them daily. May we not seek revenge because we place all these burdens into Your able hands. Jesus, I love you. Amen.

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10th November, 2024

Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

1st Reading: 1 Kings 17:10-16
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 146:7, 8-9, 9-10
2nd Reading: Hebrews 9:24-28
Alleluia: Mark 5:3
Gospel: Mark 12:38-44 or Mark 12:41-44

Homily Theme: This Poor Widow Put in More Than all the Rest – Luke 21:1-4, Mark 12:38-44

Verse of the Day Reflection: Did she really give more than all the rest? According to Jesus, she did! So, how can that be? This Gospel passage reveals to us how God sees our giving compared to the worldly view. What is giving and generosity all about? Is it about how much money we have? Or is it something deeper, something more internal? Certainly, it is the latter. Giving, in this case, is in reference to money. But this is simply an illustration of all forms of giving we are called to offer. For example, we are also called to give our time and talents to God for the love of others, the upbuilding of the Church, and the spreading of the Gospel. Look at giving from this perspective. Consider the giving of some of the great saints who lived hidden lives. St. Thérèse of Lisieux, for example, gave her life to Christ in countless small ways. She lived within the walls of her convent and had little interaction with the world. Therefore, from a worldly perspective, she gave very little and made little difference. However, today she is

considered one of the greatest doctors of the Church, thanks to the small gift of her spiritual autobiography and the witness of her life. The same may be said of you. Perhaps you are one who is busy with what seems to be small and insignificant daily tasks. Perhaps cooking, cleaning, caring for the family and the like occupy your day. Or perhaps your employment takes up most of what you do each day and you find you have little time left for “great” things offered to Christ. The question is really this: How does God see your daily service? Reflect, today, on your calling in life. Perhaps you are not called to go forth and do “great things” from a public and worldly perspective. Or perhaps you do not even do “great things” that are visible within the Church. But what God sees are the daily acts of love you do in the smallest of ways. Embracing your daily duty, loving your family, offering daily prayers, etc., are treasures that you can offer God every day. He sees these and, most importantly, He sees the love and devotion with which you do them. So do not give in to a false and worldly notion of greatness. Do small things with great love and you will be giving an abundance to God in service of His holy will.

Prayer: Lord, I give myself to You and to Your service this day and every day. May I do all I am called to do with great love. Please continue to show me my daily duty and help me to embrace that duty in accordance with Your holy will. Jesus, I love You. Amen.

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17th November, 2024

Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

1st Reading: Daniel 12:1-3
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 16:5, 8, 9-10, 11
2nd Reading: Hebrews 10:11-14, 18
Alleluia: Luke 21:36
Gospel: Mark 13:24-32

Homily Theme: Heaven And Earth Will Pass Away But My Words Will Not – Mark 13:31

Verse of the Day Reflection: Yes, it is true. Heaven as it is now and Earth as it is now will pass away. The Gospels and the Book of Revelation speak to this truth. As we draw close to the end of this liturgical year, we are reminded of this fact. We are reminded that Jesus will return in splendour and glory and will make all things new. The world as we know it will be made anew and Heaven will be joined to this new Earth and all will be one. Jesus will reign in this new world as the glorious King of all. One thing this tells us is that we should not become overly attached to the things of this passing world. True, earthly wealth and possessions may offer a temporary satisfaction to our lives, but never a permanent one. In time, the things of this world will all disappear. So, if we work to build up only earthly wealth and possessions, we should know that all those things will eventually pass away and we would be left with nothing. So what is it that is eternal? The answer is given in the passage above. Jesus says that His “words will not pass away.” Namely, all that is true and revealed by God as true is eternal and worth holding on to. This reveals to us that Jesus’ words are the true riches that we must seek. By embracing His Word, clinging to it, entering into it, believing it and letting it change us, we are embracing the eternal. We are embracing that which we will have for all eternity. This is an important truth to understand and live.

Reflect, today, upon the simple fact that everything in life is passing away except the words of our Lord. All that He has spoken and revealed to us will remain for all time and these truths are the only things in life worth working for. Turn your eyes to the Word of God and try to grasp its meaning more deeply, so that you can begin to build up treasure in Heaven, here and now!

Prayer: Lord, I do believe all that You have spoken and revealed. Help me to listen to You all the more and to cling to Your every word. Jesus, I love You. Amen

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24th November, 2024
Feast of Christ the King

- 1st Reading:** Daniel 7:13-14
- Responsorial Psalm:** Psalm 93:1, 1-2, 5
- 2nd Reading:** Revelation 1:5-8
- Alleluia:** Mark 11:9, 10
- Gospel:** John 18:33B-37

Homily Theme: Jesus Christ The King of the Universe
(Solemnity)

Verse of the Day Reflection: Happy Solemnity of Jesus Christ, King of the Universe! This is the last Sunday of the Church year, which means we focus on the final and glorious things to come! It also means that next Sunday is the First Sunday of Advent. When we say Jesus is a king, we mean a few things. First, He is our Shepherd. As our Shepherd, He desires to lead us personally as a loving father would. He wants to enter our lives personally, intimately, and carefully, never imposing Himself, but always offering Himself as our guide. Jesus will only govern our lives if we freely surrender ourselves. When that happens, though, His Kingdom begins to become established within us! And through us in the world.

Additionally, Jesus does wish for His Kingdom to begin to be established in our world. First and foremost, this takes place when we become His sheep and thus, become His instruments to help convert the world. However, as King, He also calls us to establish His Kingdom by seeing to it that His truth and law is respected within civil society. It is Christ’s authority as King that gives us the authority and duty as Christians to do all we can to fight civil injustices and bring about respect for every human person.

All civil law ultimately gains its authority from Christ alone, since He is the one and only Universal King. First, there are some things we cannot impose. For example, we cannot force people to go to Mass each Sunday. This would hinder one’s freedom to enter into this precious gift. We know Jesus requires it of us for the good of our souls, but it must still be embraced freely. However, there are some things that we must “impose” upon others. The protection of the unborn, poor and vulnerable must be “imposed.” The freedom of conscience must be written into our laws. The freedom to practice our faith openly (religious liberty) within any institution must be “imposed” also. And there are many other things we could list here. What’s important to point out is that, at the end of all time, Jesus will be returning to Earth in all His glory and He will then establish His permanent and unending Kingdom. Reflect, today, upon your own embrace of Christ as King. Does He truly govern your life in every way? Do you allow Him to have complete control over your life? When this is done freely and completely, the Kingdom of God is established in your life. Let Him reign, so that you can be converted and, through you, others can come to know Him as Lord of all!

Prayer: Lord, You are the sovereign King of the Universe. You are Lord of all. Come reign in my life and make my soul Your holy dwelling place. Lord, come transform our world and make it a place of true peace and justice. May Your Kingdom come! Jesus, I love You. Amen.



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KNOWING THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW IN CONTEXT

CONT'D FROM (AUGUST & SEPTEMBER EDITION)



by Rev. Fr.
Gabou Secka

Summarily, three arguments have been given by those who contend that Jesus could have sinned:

- A. If Christ's temptations were genuine then he had to be peccable.
- B. Being truly human, he must be peccable.
Since Christ as the second Adam corresponds to the first Adam, He had to be peccable.

In response to these arguments, the following counter-arguments do not only dispel doubts regarding Jesus' impeccability but also redefine fundamental biblical theology about Jesus' person and his relationship to the wilderness experience of the temptations.

Matthew's use of the verb *peira,zw* makes it clear that Jesus was indeed tempted/tested (Mt 4:1). In response to the first argument one must keep in mind that Jesus' humanity is not reason enough for the denial of his divinity; temptation to sin is not equivalent to susceptibility to sin. As Walvoord puts it,

"It is possible for a rowboat to attack a battleship, even though it is conceivably impossible for the rowboat to conquer the battleship. The idea that temptability implies susceptibility is unsound. While the temptation may be real, there may be infinite power to resist that temptation; and if that power is infinite, the person is impeccable."

Also, the fact that this pericope is being studied from an anthropological point of view, thereby highlighting Jesus' humanity, is not in any way a downplay of his divinity or a suggestion of his peccability.

The foundation of Christ's person is his divine nature, not his human nature. He is the God-Man and not the Man-God. It is the divine nature, and not the human which is the basis of Christ's person. The second Trinitarian person is the root and stock into which the human nature is grafted. Though Christ is of both human and divine desires, he has only one determinative will. That determinative will is in the eternal *lo,goj* and continuously follows the will of the Father. Therefore statements one may make about what the humanity of Christ could or could not do must always be tempered by this understanding of the theanthropic Person. This understanding of the person of Jesus Christ is essential to evaluate adequately the second argument that since Jesus Christ was human he had to be peccable. Succumbing to sin or susceptibility to sin is a reality for a person, but not for a nature. Dabney states,

"Since the humanity never was, in

fact, alone, the question whether, if alone, it would not have been peccable, like Adam, is idle ... it is impossible that the person constituted in union with the eternal and immutable Word can sin; for this is an absolute shield to the lower nature, against error."

It is the person, the rational being, who sins against God. Man is a sinner, and therefore sins. The person, not just a nature within the person, is held accountable for sin. Thus one is wrong in suggesting that Christ could sin because he possessed a human nature. Instead one must ask what the person of Jesus Christ can do. He possessed a genuine sinless human nature, and as a person he was impeccable. To state anything else is to impugn the character of God. As Chafer stated, "Since this bond of union which unites Christ's two natures – for he is one Person – is so complete, the humanity of Christ could not sin. Should his humanity sin, God would sin."

Other theological questions emerge from the above points which are related to our position that Jesus' temptations, as narrated by Matthew, is paradigmatic for man. Could Jesus associate with man's weaknesses if he had no possibility of succumbing to his temptations? Must Christ, in order to sympathize with man and be his model, be inwardly polluted by sin as man is? Certainly not, because the Scriptures affirm both his sympathizing ability (Heb 4:15), and his total absence of any taint of sin. Though he was a man, he was not a sinner (Rom 8:3); he was "without sin" (Heb 4:15); he "knew no sin" (2 Cor 5:21). The ability to sympathize is unrelated to susceptibility to sin. A person not involved in some sin can give help and compassion to another person in that sin. In fact, he can do so more capably than someone who has been enticed by it. If one is drawn into sin, he is less able than others to comfort and succor. Thus Christ is the only One who can most adequately and completely aid and console believers when they face attacks by Satan.

Finally the argument from the Adam-Christ typology is fraught with lapses as the previous two. This typology entails analogies of both similarities and dissimilarities between Adam and Christ (Rom 5:12-21). When the dissimilarities are considered, one soon realizes that there are several antitheses: Adam's trespass made "the many" sinners, Christ's obedience makes "the many" righteous; Adam's trespass brought condemnation, Christ's obedience brings justification; Adam's trespass brought death, Christ's obedience brings life. Therefore, an argument for Jesus' peccability based on his correspondence to Adam is

lame. Yes, the Scriptures do state that Jesus Christ has a correspondence to the first Adam. Yet that correspondence does not imply nor demand peccability. This case sufficiently explains, by contrast, the impeccability of Jesus. He has every natural faculty which, in Adam's case, was abused to the perpetration of his first sin. But (in Jesus) they were infallibly regulated by what Adam did not have – a certain, yet most free, determination of his (Jesus) disposition to holiness alone.

The Greek verb *peiraizō* bears a two-pronged significance: both negative and positive. The test motif is almost synonymous with story itself, inasmuch as the most common way to organize a story (even when recounting a real-life event) is to portray the protagonist in a situation that tests his or her identity and ability. If a force actively pulls the protagonist to do a wrongful action, the result is a temptation story. But testing someone, rather than inducement to evil, is a problematic experience God uses to manifest a person's true condition and character. That is why Job could declare in the midst of his temptation, "But He knows the way that I take; when He has tested me, I shall come out like gold" (Job 23:10). The matthean report of Jesus' trial in the wilderness presents a dual-dimensional temptation motif: (a) Satan clearly intends to maneuver Jesus into sin and error, to pollute Jesus' life and ministry. He knows that Jesus' death would eventually destroy his (Satan) power. The ultimate issue behind these temptations was idolatry. The real purpose of Satan's tempting act was that he would be worshipped instead of God. (b) On the other hand, the Father's testing of the Son is positive, meant to manifest the Son's true condition and character. It is therefore theologically preferable to think of this incident as being not so much the "tempting" as the "testing" of Jesus.

Having studied and researched into different aspects of the text of Mt 4:1-11 (and the Gospel of Matthew as a whole), analyzing its scope and motif, structure and theology, I conclude with the following points of note.

Amongst the diverse hermeneutic approaches that have been employed in the interpretation of this text, from the epoch of the Fathers of the Church to the present, two approaches emerge as more important and complementary – the classic-parenetic and the christological. The former is paradigmatic because it recognizes in Jesus' actions an example of faith that should be emulated; and the latter is exclusive in that it sees in the temptation narrative a unique experience bound solely to the person of Christ, and not a narrative dealing with everyday human experiences. It is my conclusion that both approaches are indispensable for a satisfactory appraisal of this narrative.

I also perceive a kind of dualism in the text. On the one hand the text expresses realism and historicity, but on the other it is shrouded in mysticism. The report of specific scenes (wilderness and the temple), and the person of Jesus, the record of his fast and consequent hunger render both historicity and reality to the narrative; but the personification of the devil, the manner of Jesus' movements from the wilderness to the Pinnacle of the temple and to a very high mountain from which all the kingdoms of the world can be seen, and the presence of angels add a mysterious tinge to the story. This atmosphere of mysticism is further enhanced by the general presumption that Jesus is capable of performing supernatural or miraculous acts. Not once did Jesus object to the devil's presumption that he (Jesus) is able to act mysteriously (first and second temptations). Therefore, while I agree that this episode at the beginning of Jesus' public ministry is "real," this narrative is not intended to be

understood as a perceptible occurrence but meant to portray a trial undergone by Jesus at the outset of his messianic career. Neither should it be reduced to a vision, but rather an inner experience presented externally and graphically.

It is necessary to include in this conclusion that our understanding of what is called "the devil" or "Satan" must go beyond a "person" figure, and should be comprehended as the experience that evil is not simply a matter of a person's discretion but that it can also exert power over people. In addition, we must not simply conclude that in one campaign Jesus conquered the tempter forever and that the tempter never came to him again. Rather, the specter of temptation remained throughout his public life and ministry till his passion and death (e.g. at Caesarea Philippi [16:23]; in Gethsemane [26:36-46]; and cf. Lk 22:28). Eternal vigilance, therefore, is the recommended disposition against temptation.

Whether the emphasis of interpretation of this text be parenetic or christological, or both, its thematic correspondence is laden with Judeo-Christian reminiscences. The drama of the narrative is built upon OT Scriptures, thereby establishing a fundamental link between divine revelation as contained both in the OT and in this early Christian Gospel. At the same time, the difference between the two moments in salvation history is easily differentiated: the moment of Israel's failure to yield in obedience to the divine will is clearly removed from the moment of the obedient "Son of God." The incomplete "old" requires and awaits fulfillment; the exemplary "new" fulfills. It is no understatement, therefore, to conclude that this episodic event of temptations confirms Mt as a Gospel with a central theme of "fulfillment."

Based on my research, I conclude that to understand Matthew's Gospel today means rethinking his Gospel in light of our own experience of history and of current events; it means retelling the story of Jesus, the "God with us," with Matthew's help and reinterpreting the "Gospel of the kingdom" anew for today. Matthew is beholden to experience. Especially significant in his Gospel is the experience of prayer. In our pericope, Jesus prays before his desert trial; he will begin other major events in his life with prayer (e.g. before the passion [26:36-46]; on the cross [27:46-47]). Moreover, the theme of prayer is amply treated in the Gospel (6:5-15; 7:7-11; 18:19-20). The imitation of Jesus' way, then, means action and prayer, daring and prayer, obedience and prayer, suffering and prayer. This is the truth enacted and taught by the matthean Jesus.

In Mt, while obedience to God's will entails the certainty of hardship, persecution, and even death, the reward is immeasurable – eternal life. The story of Jesus is both a model story, and a story of God. Understood this way, this story makes sense at the beginning of a Gospel that unfolds what obedience to God means. As Luz puts it in his analysis of Dostoyevski's "Grand Inquisitor," it anticipates the way the Son of God has gone before his disciples in the entire Gospel, and this is the way that finally leads to resurrection and to authority over heaven and earth.

Finally, against the doubts of some critics, my research leads me to affirm that Jesus was truly tested in every human way without any change in the impeccability of his divine-human status and that he, like other men, grappled with the rigors of the trials, emerging victorious because of his obedience to the Father.

***THE END OF THIS IMPORTANT TOPIC
"KNOWING THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW
IN CONTEXT"***



INTRODUCTION TO THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT MARK

by Rev. Fr. Gabou Secka

THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

The first three gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke, are always known as the synoptic gospels. The word *synoptic* comes from two Greek words which mean *to see together*, and these three are called the synoptic gospels because they can be set down in parallel columns and their common matter looked at together. It would be possible to argue that of them all Mark is the most important. It would indeed be possible to go further and to argue that it is the most important book in the world, because it is agreed by nearly everyone that it is the earliest of all the gospels and therefore the first life of Jesus that has come down to us. Mark may not have been the first man to write the life of Jesus. Doubtless there were earlier simple attempts to set down the story of Jesus' life; but Mark's gospel is certainly the earliest life of Jesus that has survived.

THE PEDIGREE OF THE GOSPELS

When we consider how the gospels came to be written, we must try to think ourselves back to a time when there was no such thing as a printed book in all the world. The gospels were written long before printing had been invented, compiled when every book had to be carefully and laboriously written out by hand. It is clear that so long as that was the case only a few copies of any book could exist.

How do we know, or how can we deduce, that Mark was the first of all the gospels? When we read the synoptic gospels even in English we see that there are remarkable similarities between them. They contain the same incidents often told in the same words; and they contain accounts of the teaching of Jesus which are often almost identical. If we compare the story of the Feeding of the Five Thousand in the three gospels (Mark 6:30–44; Matthew 14:12–21; Luke 9:10–17) we see that it is told in almost exactly the same words and in exactly the same way. A very clear instance of this is the story of the healing of the man who was sick of the palsy (Mark 2:1–12; Matthew 9:1–8; Luke 5:17–26). The accounts are so similar that even a little parenthesis—“he said to the paralytic”—occurs in all three in exactly the same place. The correspondences are so close that we are forced to one of two conclusions. Either all three are taking their material from some common source, or two of the three are based on the third.

When we study the matter closely we find that Mark can be divided into 105 sections. Of these 93 occur in Matthew and 81 in Luke. Only four are not included either in Matthew or in Luke. Even more compelling is this. Mark has 661 verses; Matthew has 1,068 verses; Luke has 1,149 verses. Of Mark's 661 verses, Matthew reproduces no fewer than 606. Sometimes he alters the wording slightly but he even reproduces 51 per cent. of Mark's actual words. Of Mark's 661 verses Luke reproduces 320, and he actually uses 53 per cent. of Mark's actual words. Of the 55 verses of Mark which Matthew does not reproduce 31 are found in Luke. So the result is that there are only 24 verses in Mark which do not occur somewhere in Matthew and Luke. This makes it look very like as if Matthew and Luke were using Mark as the basis of their gospels.

What makes the matter still more certain is this. Both Matthew and Luke very largely follow Mark's order of

events. Sometimes Matthew alters Mark's order and sometimes Luke does. But when there is a change in the order Matthew and Luke *never* agree together against Mark. Always one of them retains Mark's order of events.

A close examination of the three gospels makes it clear that Matthew and Luke had Mark before them as they wrote; and they used his gospel as the basis into which they fitted the extra material which they wished to include.

It is thrilling to remember that when we read Mark's gospel we are reading the first life of Jesus, on which all succeeding lives have necessarily been based.

MARK, THE WRITER OF THE GOSPEL

Who then was this Mark who wrote the gospel? The New Testament tells us a good deal about him. He was the son of a well-to-do lady of Jerusalem whose name was Mary, and whose house was a rallying-point and meeting place of the early church (Acts 12:12). From the very beginning Mark was brought up in the very centre of the Christian fellowship. Mark was also the nephew of Barnabas, and when Paul and Barnabas set out on their first missionary journey they took Mark with them to be their secretary and attendant (Acts 12:25). This journey was a most unfortunate one for Mark. When they reached Perga, Paul proposed to strike inland up to the central plateau; and for some reason Mark left the expedition and went home (Acts 13:13). He may have gone home because he was scared to face the dangers of what was notoriously one of the most difficult and dangerous roads in the world, a road hard to travel and haunted by bandits. He may have gone home because it was increasingly clear that the leadership of the expedition was being assumed by Paul and Mark may have felt with disapproval that his uncle was being pushed into the background. He may have gone home because he did not approve of the work which Paul was doing. Chrysostom—perhaps with a flash of imaginative insight—says that Mark went home because he wanted his mother!

Paul and Barnabas completed their first missionary journey and then proposed to set out upon their second. Barnabas was anxious to take Mark with them again. But Paul refused to have anything to do with the man “who had withdrawn from them in Pamphylia.” (Acts 15:37–40.) So serious was the difference between them that Paul and Barnabas split company, and, so far as we know, never worked together again. For some years Mark vanishes from history. Tradition has it that he went down to Egypt and founded the Church of Alexandria there. Whether or not that is true we do not know, but we do know that when Mark re-emerges it is in the most surprising way. We learn to our surprise that when Paul writes the letter to the Colossians from prison in Rome Mark is there with him (Colossians 4:10). In another prison letter, to Philemon, Paul numbers Mark among his fellow-labourers (verse 24). And, when Paul is waiting for death and very near the end, he writes to Timothy, his right-hand man, and says, “Take Mark and bring him with you; for he is a most useful servant to me.” (2 Timothy 4:11.) It is a far cry from the time when Paul contemptuously dismissed Mark as a quitter. Whatever had happened Mark had redeemed himself. He was the one man Paul wanted at the end.

TO BE CONT'D NEXT ISSUE

