

**Lent: when our hope, faith  
and charity are tested...**

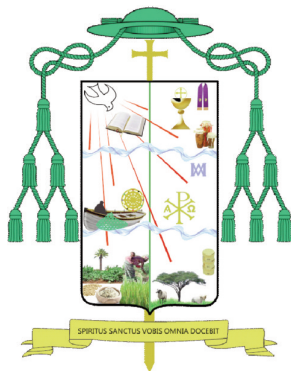
***Bishop Mendy's Pastoral Letter***



Volume 43 No. 2

APRIL / MAY 2019

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

*Incorporating The Catholic Newsletter*

**The Church looks to the Cross  
and Resurrection**



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



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By way of introduction

## Sharing the mystery of love



THIS ISSUE of the Newsletter covers the period from the Fifth Sunday of Lent and all the way through Holy Week to Easter and the Ascension. It is the crucial time of the year for all Christians - certainly for Christians who take their religion seriously.

As individuals and as a worshipping community, how can we make the most of Holy Week and Easter, so that we become more hopeful and happier disciples of Christ?

We might consider two words we hear so often in Lent and at Easter Time: *Paschal Mystery*.

A mystery, in the language of the Church, is a truth of our religion which has been revealed by God himself, and is beyond our full understanding.

The Incarnation of Jesus Christ, true God and true Man, is a great Mystery, central to the Christian faith. So is the Paschal Mystery. Paschal derives from *Pesach* – the delivery of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt at the time of the Passover. By his resurrection, Christ is our Passover who has delivered us from the slavery of sin. He is the Lamb of God, sacrificed for us and for all humanity.

Theology and Christian doctrine may seem abstract and obscure. But Jesus told us that we should receive him with the faith and trust of children. At the heart of the Paschal mystery

is, quite simply, love: God's love for his human creation.

Love is not an intellectual concept; it is the heartbeat of the universe. It's seen in the instinctive love and need of an infant for its mother. It's seen in the kindnesses, large and small, we share with each other. Above all else, it's seen in Jesus: in the manger at Bethlehem, in his teaching and healing among us, and in his death, resurrection and ascension.

We'll never comprehend, in this life, the full joy of the Paschal Mystery. But we can actually live each day by the Paschal Mystery as trusting children of God, asking Jesus to share his love with us so that we may show it to others.

May we all, this Holy Week and Easter Time, grow closer to our Lord Jesus, Lamb of God and Saviour of the world. In doing so, we shall become closer to each other in compassion and kindness - because Jesus came into the world to serve others. The compassion and kindness he showed to everyone - even his enemies - he wants us to show to each other. We believe that there is much more to human life than mere existence, often in competition with each other. This world, with all its joys and sorrows, all its opportunities for human advancement, belongs to him; and it is in the power of his sacrificial death and resurrection that we can help to advance the coming of his eternal Kingdom.

### *Eli, Eli, lemi sabachthani ?*

Christ's last words from the Cross

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Use  
your  
feet!

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# Here & there

## NEWS FROM AROUND THE DIOCESE

### Appeal for Gambia's first Catholic radio station

AN APPEAL for funds has been made for 'Radio Veritas' – the projected name for The Gambia's first Catholic radio station. The appeal, by the Gambia Pastoral Institute (GPI), was read in all parish churches of the diocese on the Second Sunday in Lent, 16th March.

It is estimated that the launch of Radio Veritas will cost over D1.2 million.

GPI's well-equipped studios at present broadcast 'Sunday Magazine' every Sunday on several radio stations, and the television programme *Kaadu Dunda Gi* every Sunday at 1pm on GRTS

### Youth Cross Weekend in Soma

At least two thousand young people are expected to take part in the fifth Youth Cross Weekend. This year, for the first time, it is to be held outside the Kombos - in Soma.

This year's theme is 'Here I am, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word' (Luke 1:38), which was the theme of the World Youth Day held in January in Panama.

The Youth Cross Weekend has hitherto been held every other year, but – as announced by Bishop Mendy last year - it is now to take place annually.

The fee is D500, covering transport, food and accommodation. Registration is already open, and closes on Tuesday 14th May. Those interested should contact their parish representative of the Catholic Diocesan Youth Committee

## CONGRATULATIONS

Tuesday 14th May  
*Feast of St Matthias, Apostle*  
 is the 13th Anniversary  
 of the Episcopal Ordination  
 of the Third Bishop of Banjul  
**The Right Reverend**  
**Robert P. Ellison CSSp**

Wednesday 10th April  
 is the 20th Anniversary  
 of the Ordination of  
**Fr Joseph Karbo & Fr Michael Ndecky**  
*Fr Karbo is now studying in Kenya*

During April, four other priests of the diocese celebrate the anniversary of their Ordination

Friday 12th April **Fr Edward Gomez** (1986)  
 Saturday 13th April **Fr Anthony Gabisi** (1985)  
**Fr Peter Gomez** (1985)  
 Friday 26th April **Fr David Jimoh Jarju** (1986)

### Bishop Mendy issues pastoral letter

THE BISHOP of Banjul, the Most Revd Gabriel Mendy CSSp, has issued a pastoral letter for Lent.

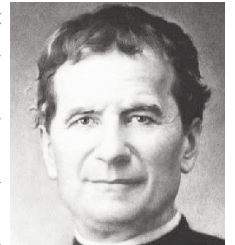
A pastoral letter is a letter of spiritual guidance written by the bishop of a diocese to the faithful in his charge.

The Bishop's Letter was printed courtesy of the Knight of St Peter & St Paul.

*Bishop Mendy's Lent Letter 2019 in full, page 24.*

### Weekend with St John Bosco

FRIDAY 31st January was the Feast of St John Bosco (*pictured right*), and the Salesian Fathers of Don Bosco based at Kunkujang led a 'Weekend with St John Bosco' at St Augustine's Senior Secondary School, Banjul, from Friday 1st to Sunday 3rd February.



Around 200 young people gathered on Friday evening to register, and on Saturday took part in a varied programme of talks, discussions, games and a candle-light procession and rosary.

After Mass at 6.30am on Saturday, Fr Peter Wojnarowski SDB, leader of the Salesians, gave an address on the life and work of Don Bosco, and Fr Bruno Toupan spoke about vocations. Some religious sisters talked about their work, followed by Fr Pascal Mendy, Director of Vocations. After lunch came football and other games, and in the evening a 'talent night', with singing and dancing.

On Sunday morning, Fr Bruno Toupan, Parish Priest of Holy Spirit Church, Banjul, celebrated the 10am Mass, which was followed by lunch before the young people dispersed.



On Friday 22nd February, the choir of Holy Rosary Church Lamin gave a concert at St Charles Lwanga Hall, Fajikunda.

### Soma in song

THE PEOPLE of the Church of Mary, Mother of God, Soma, on Friday and Saturday 22nd and 23rd February held a parish feast. The Saturday evening concert featured songs and dances. As well as Soma's own church choir, taking part were performers from Farafenni, Kartong, Darsilami, Brusibi, Bwiam and St Therese's Junior Choir. The Parish Priest at Soma is Fr Anthony Lippo CSSp.

The following day Fr Joseph Colley, Parish Priest at Fajikunda, preached at a 10am Mass, followed by a celebratory lunch.

### Teachers' retreat

AROUND twenty-five Teachers of Religious Education in Catholic schools gathered at GPI from 25th to 30th March for their annual residential Lenten retreat, led by various priests.



*Fee moi  
Gambia*

### **Baptist beginnings**

VARIOUS reports indicate that the tourist industry is doing well this season – though those involved are no doubt striving to do even better, well-aware of the ever-growing international competition.

Tourism on the present scale - especially 'package tourism' - dates from the late 20th century. But its roots are in the first half of the 19th century.

In 1841 an English Baptist missionary, Thomas Cook, arranged for a special train to be run to a temperance meeting (the temperance movement is dedicated to the control of the consumption of alcohol).

This was probably the first-ever publicly-advertised excursion train. Cook began to arrange excursions on a regular basis, and in 1856 he led his first 'grand tour' of Europe.

In the early 1860s Cook became an agent for the sale of travel tickets, and with his son John founded the Thomas Cook & Son travel agency.

In the 1880s the firm also organised military transport and postal services.

Today - 178 years after Thomas Cook's first excursion - The Gambia is among Thomas Cook's numerous tourist destinations throughout the world.

### **'Aunty Lou' remembered**

FIVE years ago, on 2nd May 2014, The Gambia lost a citizen of great character and achievement - Louise Njie, one of the last remaining Aku matriarch pioneers in the realm of health and education. She was known for her directness, integrity and energy. 'Aunty Lou' was equally known for her sense of humour.

Louise was born in January 1922. Her father was Sir John Mahoney, Speaker of the National Assembly from 1963 to 1974. Her mother, Hannah, was the first Gambian woman to work as a clerk in the Government Secretariat – as long ago as the 1910s.

After St Joseph's Infants' and the Methodists Girls' High School - where in 1942 she gained the Cambridge School Certificate - Louise went to Achimota College, in Accra.

On her return she taught at the Methodist Girls' High School from 1942 to 1949, and then from 1949 to 1955 at Bakau Primary School, where she was Headmistress from 1957 to 1963.

In 1958 Louise Njie was appointed to the committee preparing for the visit of Queen Elizabeth in 1961. From 1963 to 1964 she studied educational administration at Oxford, and then became Education Officer responsible for girls' education. She championed the training of women teachers, and was Chief Education Officer for schools in Banjul and the Kombos until 1977.

Mrs Njie was active in the People's Progressive Party, and in 1977 President Dawda Jawara nominated her as The Gambia's second woman MP.

In the House she raised issues relating to women and children such as the setting-up of day-centres for children of working mothers and the compulsory teaching of domestic science for schoolgirls. She championed the revision of the law that prohibited illegitimate children from inheriting from their fathers.

In 1985 Mrs Njie became Minister of Education. During her tenure the new campus of Gambia College was opened at Brikama. By the time she left, girls' enrolment had increased, and the number of women teachers had risen by 20 per cent.

As Health Minister from 1987 to 1990, Louise Njie championed family planning, health nutrition and education to help reduce the maternal mortality rate. She spearheaded The Gambia's early response to the Aids pandemic when, in 1987, she established the National Aids Control Programme.

Louise's brother John became Director of Medical Services in 1964. In 1973 he was appointed Director of Programmes at the African Regional Office of the World Health Organisation in Brazzaville. John married the distinguished Gambian historian, Dr Florence Mahoney (who in January this year celebrated her 90th birthday). John died aged 93 in 2012.

Louise's sister Augusta was the first wife of President Jawara. Augusta died in Britain in 1981.

In 1950 Louise Njie married a dentist, Denis Njie, with whom she had a son, Koblah, who died in 1997.

Aunty Lou was active in charitable work, serving as a member of Gambia Red Cross for two terms and as a member of the District Synod of the Methodist Church. She founded Soroptimists International of The Gambia. If space allowed, one could say much more; Aunty Lou's tireless pursuit of good causes make her an admiral role-model for our own day.

### **Sorry**

I HAVE a friend who never says 'sorry'. Yet it's a most useful word for everyone, in whatever language.

'Sorry' has two uses: to express sympathy ('I'm sorry your sister's ill'), and to ask forgiveness ('I'm sorry I'm late').

We're all familiar with 'Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us'. We say sorry to God, just as others say sorry to us.

How do I encourage my sorry-less friend to say sorry, both in sympathy and in contrition – two feelings he must surely sometimes feel?

### **The reason why**

I'VE recently spent a few days in hospital. A nurse said to me, 'Why are you always reading?'

My reply was: 'Because Allah gave me a brain, and I'm thanking Him by using it.'

## OBITUARY

### Islamic and Christian scholar of world-wide reputation

THE NEWSLETTER for December 2018 carried a report about Dr Lamin Sanneh, a Gambian scholar of world-wide recognition in the field of Islamic and Christian history. On 6th January, just seven weeks after our report, Dr Sanneh died in New Haven, Connecticut, USA, where at Yale University he was Professor of Missions & World Christianity, having taught there since 1989.

On 14th February an inter-faith memorial meeting in Dr Sanneh's honour was held at the Eburnjan Theatre, Kanifing. Muslim and Christian prayers were offered. Among those speaking about Dr Sanneh's life and achievements since boyhood were his brother, Musa O. Sanneh; a schoolmate, the lawyer Fafa Edrissa M'Bai; a 'sister', Mary Moore-Wright; and a Methodist Local Preacher, Sammy Davis. Three videos featured Lamin Sanneh speaking about his work and interests.

The programme was introduced by the Revd Gabriel Leonard Alle and closed by James Davis.

Lamin Sanneh was born in Janjangbureh (then known as Georgetown) in May 1942, and brought up in this country. After studying at the University of Birmingham in England and the Near East School of Theology in Beirut, Lebanon, he earned a doctorate in Islamic history at the University of London.



During a long career, Dr Sanneh taught at the University of Ghana, the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, and at both Harvard and Yale in the USA.

He was an Honorary Research Professor at the School of Oriental & African

Studies in the University of London, and a life member of Clare Hall, Cambridge.

He was a Commandeur de l'Ordre National du Lion, Senegal's highest honour.

Dr Sanneh wrote many books and articles on the relationship between Islam and Christianity. He became a Methodist, and later, a Catholic. He was a member of the Pontifical Commission of Religious Relations with Muslims and a member of the Pontifical Commission of the Historical Sciences.

### Ramadan begins on 6th May

RAMADAN this year begins on or about Monday 6th May, when Muslims in The Gambia will join almost two billion Muslims throughout the world in observing the most sacred month of the Islamic year.

The word 'Ramadan' comes from an Arabic root which means scorching heat or dryness. Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar - a time for fasting, prayers, charity and self-reflection.

Fasting is the fourth of the 'five pillars' of Islam. During Ramadan, Muslims fast between sunrise and sunset. There are exceptions for the sick, the elderly, children who have not reached puberty, some travellers, and pregnant or nursing women.

The last ten days are the most sacred period of Ramadan. On the 27th day of Ramadan (this year, about Friday 31st April) most Sunni Muslims observe the 'Night of Power', *Lailat al-Qadr*, which commemorates the day when the Prophet Muhammad received the first verses of the Qur'an.

This year, Ramadan ends on or about Wednesday 5th June, with the celebration of *Eid al-Fitr*, known locally as Koriteh, which marks the end of fasting and the first day of *Shawwal*, the tenth month in the Islamic calendar.

**Best Wishes  
to our Muslim  
Brothers & Sisters  
for  
a well-spent Ramadan  
and a happy Koriteh**

### The Pope's Prayer Intentions

#### APRIL

For doctors and their humanitarian collaborators in war zones who risk their lives to save the lives of others.

#### MAY

That the Church in Africa, through the commitment of its members, may be the seed of unity among her peoples and a sign of hope for the continent.



# Jerusalem: abode of peace – or violence and confrontation?



## The fateful week

At the beginning of what we call Holy Week, a small procession led by a man on a donkey came down from the Mount of Olives, through the Kidron Valley and into Jerusalem. There were cries of 'Hosanna', and some people waved branches of palm trees. The man was Jesus, a prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.

As he drew near, Jesus wept. Jerusalem would not accept him, and in the not-too-distant future it would be surrounded by enemies and destroyed. (That was to happen in AD 70, when the Romans crushed a Jewish revolt. The Temple was never rebuilt; its site is now occupied by a Muslim shrine, the Dome of the Rock).

Jesus entered the city and went straight to the Temple, where he drove out the money changers. It was the week before Passover, and Jesus spent a lot of time preaching in the Temple courtyard.

St Mark tells us that when the chief priests heard about Jesus' activities they resolved to get rid of him. Any threat to the Temple, especially during the emotional festival of Passover, was likely to lead to violence - which could result in dreadful Roman reprisals.

On the first day of the festival, Caiaphas the High Priest had Jesus arrested. He accused Jesus of vowing to destroy the Temple. But the witnesses could not agree, and the charge was dropped. Caiaphas managed to get a conviction on a charge of blasphemy. The Jews did not have the authority to inflict capital punishment, so they sent Jesus to Pilate, the Roman governor.

## Pilate's priority

Pilate wanted above all to preserve the peace, so although he found 'no harm' in Jesus, he had him scourged and condemned to death by crucifixion. Jesus was forced to carry his cross through Jerusalem to a hill outside the city walls called Golgotha (place of the skull) or in Latin *Calvarius* (Calvary).

Victims of crucifixion could linger for hours, but Jesus died quite quickly. As the Sabbath was approaching, his friends wanted to bury him before sundown, so Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the Sanhedrin, obtained Pilate's permission to inter the body in his own tomb, one of the new cave-like sepulchres cut into the hillside near Golgotha.



*A model of Herod's Temple*

THE EVENTS of Holy Week took place in one of the world's oldest cities: Jerusalem.

Jerusalem dates back to the fourth millennium BC, long before the arrival of the Jews.

'Jerusalem' means 'abode of peace'. But the city has been twice destroyed, 23 times besieged, 52 times attacked, and 44 times captured or recaptured.

In our own day, Jerusalem is often in the news, as conflict and bitter controversy continue.

## The City of David

Jerusalem became the 'City of David' about 1000 BC, when King David conquered its inhabitants and made it the capital of his twin kingdom of Judah and Israel.

At the time of Jesus, Jerusalem was much smaller than it is today - smaller than today's Banjul - with about 25,000 inhabitants (as opposed to 740,000 in Jerusalem today).

It was surrounded by a six-and-a-half-kilometre wall pierced by massive gateways where tax collectors levied taxes on goods being taken into or out of the city.

## Herod's embellishments

Since the conquest of Jerusalem in 63 BC by Pompey the Great, Jerusalem had been part of the Roman Empire. The Romans had established their client King, Herod, who ruled for 33 years, from 37 to 4 BC.

Herod is known as the king who ordered the slaughter of the innocents when Jesus was born. But he also did more than anyone since King Solomon to adorn Jerusalem with palaces, monuments and spectacular work on the Temple, which he began rebuilding in 19 BC.

The reconstruction of the Temple lasted 46 years - over forty years after Herod's death. Its courtyard served as a gathering-place, and its porticoes sheltered merchants and money-changers. A great door led to the Sanctuary, at the west end of which was the Holy of Holies.

The Temple was the centre of religious ritual. During Roman rule it was also the High Court of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish Council. Above all, the Temple was regarded as the dwelling-place of the Divine Presence.

## Excited crowds

At Jewish festivals such as Passover, Pentecost and Sukkoth, the population of Jerusalem was swollen by up to 500,000 pilgrims from all over Palestine and beyond. Excitement often led to anti-Roman demonstrations. Pilgrims were stirred up by nationalists and would-be Messiahs. The Roman governor made a point of being present during these festivals, and drafted in extra soldiers to preserve public order.

King Herod died in 4 BC. Subsequent riots in Jerusalem, notably at Pentecost, led to Roman reprisals and the crucifixion of three thousand around the city walls; crucifixion was not in the least a punishment unique to Jesus.



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# The Seven Last Words from the Cross

## The First Word

*'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do'* Luke 23:34

JESUS asked his Father to forgive the soldiers who had scourged, mocked and tortured him and nailed him to the cross.

But wasn't he also asking forgiveness for his companions who had deserted him? For Peter, who had denied him three times? For the fickle crowd, who had called for him to be crucified? Wasn't he also asking forgiveness for us, who so often forget him?

## The Second Word

*'Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise'* Luke 23:43

IT was not only the religious leaders and the soldiers who mocked Jesus, but even one of the two criminals who had been crucified with him. The other criminal spoke up for Jesus, saying that he and his fellow malefactor were receiving their just reward; yet 'this man' - Jesus - 'has done nothing wrong'. Then he said to Jesus, 'Remember me when you come into your kingdom.'

Jesus' showed his divinity by opening heaven to a repentant sinner. What generosity to one who had only asked to be remembered!

## The Third Word

*Jesus said to his mother, 'Woman, this is your son.' Then he said to his disciple, 'This is your mother.'* John 19:26-27

MARY was at Jesus' side - by his cross - at the end of his ministry, just as she had been present at the wedding in Cana when his ministry was beginning. What sorrow Mary must have felt to see her Son mocked, tortured and crucified. A sword had pierced her soul, as prophesied so many years before by Simeon when Mary took the infant Jesus to the Temple (Luke 2:35).

At the foot of the cross were Mary, John, Mary Magdalene and Mary of Cleopas, his mother's sister. Jesus was speaking to Mary and John. He was his mother's only child, so he asked John, 'the disciple whom Jesus loved', to take care of her. And he committed John and the Church to Mary's motherhood.

## The Fourth Word

*'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'* Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:14

IN Matthew's and Mark's Gospels this is Jesus' only expression from the cross. Both Gospels relate that it was the ninth hour, after three hours of darkness, when Jesus cried out, quoting the opening words of Psalm 22, a plea to God for delivery.

Jesus died in agony, engulfed in others' sins. The burdens of the sins of all mankind were on the verge of overwhelming his humanity. Jesus died alone: 'For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ

Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all.' (1 Timothy 2:5-6). But let us not forget that Psalm 22, so agonised and so desperate, ends on a triumphant note: 'Men shall tell of the Lord to the coming generation, and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn...'

## The Fifth Word

*'I thirst.'* John 19:23

THE WOUNDS inflicted on Jesus in the scourging, the crowning with thorns, the long, painful and humiliating walk from Jerusalem to Golgotha, and the nailing to the cross, were taking their toll. He was thirsty. He was given vinegar - sour wine - to drink, possibly to dull his pain a little.

Here is a terrible paradox: Jesus, the 'living water', was himself thirsty. His humanity had been humiliated, his body abused and subjected to murderous pain. He truly suffered for us. This was the price he was paying to save us from our sins.

## The Sixth Word

*'It is finished!'* John 19:30

IT is finished. In Latin, Consumatum est: it is accomplished. In yielding his spirit to the Father, Jesus accomplished his earthly mission. For this he had been born, had lived among us, had come to Jerusalem to suffer innocently and to die as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

In Jesus' fear, his ultimate loneliness, he resembled each of us at the moment of death. But his was a death unlike all others: it was the very offering of absolute love by Jesus on behalf of sinful mankind.

## The Seventh Word

*'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.'* Luke 23:46

THESE few last words of Jesus in St Luke's account of Christ's passion are a quotation from Psalm 31, verse 5. This psalm, like Psalm 22, is an anguished cry for delivery, but it is also an expression of trust in God: 'I have passed out of mind like one who is dead, I have become like a broken vessel. Yes, I hear the whispering of many - terror on every side - as they scheme together against me, as they plot to take my life. But I trust in you, O Lord. I say, "You are my God. My times are in your hand..."'

Jesus' trust in his Father was absolute. Indeed, he had told his disciples, 'I and the Father are one.' (John 10:30). And he had told the disciples that he had come to Jerusalem to suffer and die in fulfilment of the Scriptures (Matthew 17:22-23).

Jesus' death was his Father's will. As Eucharistic Prayer II reminds us, 'he entered willingly into his Passion'. Jesus willingly committed his whole self to his Father.

At Night Prayer (Compline) throughout the year we echo the Psalmist and Jesus in the response:

V Into your hands I commend my spirit.

R You have redeemed us, Lord God of truth.

We should commit every day to God. Our foremost example is Jesus, who at the moment of his last agony offered everything to God, and so triumphed over sin and death.



## family circle

### Getting about

#### – on foot, by bicycle and by car

GETTING to and from work, and visiting family and friends, we're more on the move in The Gambia than ever. We need to travel safely, and so we feature some reminders about the use of our roads.

But first, a reminder to everyone about the importance of exercise – in particular, the value of walking.

#### Use your legs!

WALKING is an ideal form of exercise.

Our body has been designed to walk. We human beings have been walking for more than a million years!

Many people walk to work, or they get plenty of exercise while they're at work. But many of us walk and exercise less than our parents and grandparents did - one reason why so many are overweight.

Walking every day can help ensure that our hearts, minds, bones and muscles are working properly, as well as making us feel better.

Becoming even a little bit more active can reduce the amount of fat in our body and lessen the risk of life-threatening diseases such as cancer, type 2 diabetes and heart disease. By walking more, you will benefit immediately through enhanced energy levels, feeling less tired and having less chance of feeling 'low'.

#### Reasons for walking

There are many reasons to walk (rather than travelling by bus or car):

- \* nearly half of most people's journeys may be walkable
- \* a walk boosts your immune system for 24 hours, helping you to fend off fresh colds and other infections
- \* walking is a convenient form of exercise that can fit into your daily routine, and doesn't feel like a 'duty'
- \* walking can help save money on travel or petrol costs
- \* walking provides high-releasing natural endorphins into the blood
- \* walking can help provide opportunities to reflect, gather your thoughts and pray
- \* walking can help disperse stress and anxiety
- \* walking can help save the planet! Walking for just two days a week could save 11 stone of carbon dioxide over the course of a year.



\* the amount of calories you burn will depend on the individual, speed and type of terrain - but on average 160 calories per kilometre or 20 minutes walking.

#### How much?

The current recommendation for physical activity. Including walking, is just 30 minutes a day of moderate activity a day for adults, or 60 minutes a day for children. You don't have to do this in one go to start with, but can break it down into smaller chunks.

*If you're not sure that walking is the right exercise for you, talk to your doctor.*

### You and your bike

CYCLING can be dangerous, so take care.

- Make sure that you and your bicycle are roadworthy.
- If you carry bags on your bike, secure them on a luggage-rack. Don't fix them to your handle-bars: they could jam the spokes or, if heavy, unbalance the bike and cause an accident.
- Don't carry a passenger on your crossbar: bicycles are designed to carry the rider only!
- Many cyclists behave as though the rules of the road don't apply to them. They ride on the wrong side of the road, ignore traffic lights, and don't make signals. All this is foolhardy: dangerous to the cyclist and all others on the road.
- Don't use ear-phones while riding your bike, and don't weave in and out of heavy traffic unless you can clearly see ahead.
- Never hold on to the back of a vehicle, and always keep your hands on your handlebars.
- Many accidents to cyclists at night-time occur because they can't be seen. So have good lights and wear bright, reflective clothing. Fit reflectors on your bike.
- Busy roads are unhealthy for cyclists and joggers because of fumes from car exhaust pipes. Consider wearing a mask. At first you may feel self-conscious, but you will protect your health. Masks don't cost much, and you can wash and re-use the filter. Examine the filter in your mask at the end of a week and see how much muck it has trapped!

### Buying a bike

CHOOSING the correct size of a bike is essential, especially if you are buying a bike for a child. To gauge this, sit the child on the bicycle with the saddle and the handlebars at their lowest point. The child's feet should comfortably touch the ground on both sides. Never, ever, allow a small child to cycle anywhere dangerous – for example, a main road.

If you're buying a second-hand bicycle, check that

- The spokes aren't bent
- The frame isn't twisted (which could indicate that the bike has been in an accident)
- The wheels aren't buckled, even slightly





- The brakes have effective gripping power
- The tyres aren't cracked (which could indicate that the bike hasn't been used for a while, and that the inner-tubes could be perished).

You should get a trustworthy bike-mechanic to check that a second-hand bicycle is entirely road-worthy.

### On the road in your car



OUR roads are more and more crowded, so competent, responsible driving on everyone's part is more important than ever.

At all times, we should drive with full consideration for other road users. We need to adapt our driving to the type and condition of the road we're driving on - which may be anything from a dual carriageway to a narrow, dusty, pot-holed track.

- Try to be understanding if other drivers cause problems. They may be inexperienced, or not know the area well.
- Be patient. Remember that anyone can make a mistake.
- Don't allow yourself to become agitated or involved if someone is behaving badly on the road. Your anger will only make the situation worse. If you become really agitated, pull over and calm down; and don't continue your journey until you feel relaxed.
- Slow down and hold back if a vehicle pulls out into your path at a junction. Allow it to get clear. Don't over-react by driving too close behind it.

Cyclists and pedestrians are also road users. Drivers should try to anticipate what they may do. Pedestrians, particularly children, may step into the road without seeing an oncoming car.

Safe driving needs concentration. Eating and drinking, playing music, trying to read a map, tuning a radio, inserting a cassette or CD and arguing with passengers can all distract a driver.

The traffic laws have been made for everyone's safety, so you need to be familiar with them. Remember that the laws are in force whether or not a police officer is around!

Using hand-held mobile telephones while driving is illegal,

and the law requires that drivers and front-seat passengers must wear seat-belts while their vehicle is moving.

A word to cyclists. The rules of the road apply as fully to you as they do to motorists. Don't ride on the wrong side of the road, and don't ignore traffic lights.

Do you really need to overtake as often as you do?

Arriving just a bit later is a small price for arriving safely!

At all times, be PATIENT!



### Why celebrate Easter with eggs?

EASTER eggs are colourfully-decorated eggs given in celebration of Easter. Originally, dyed and painted chicken's eggs were used, but nowadays many Easter eggs are made of chocolate, or are plastic eggs filled with sweets.

Eggs are a symbol of fertility and rebirth. In Christianity, Easter eggs symbolise the empty tomb of Jesus: although an egg appears to be like the stone of a tomb, a bird hatches from it. Similarly, the Easter egg is a reminder that Jesus rose from the grave, and that those who believe will also experience eternal life.

The practice of decorating eggs predates Christian traditions. Decorated ostrich eggs, and representations of ostrich eggs in gold and silver, were commonly placed in graves of the ancient Sumerians and Egyptians as early as 5,000 years ago.

The Christian adaptation of decorating eggs can be traced back to the early Christians of Mesopotamia, who stained eggs red in memory of the blood of Christ.

*The Roman Ritual*, first published in 1610, contains texts of much older date.

Among the Easter blessings for lamb, bread and new produce, is a blessing for eggs:

Lord, let the grace of your blessing + come upon these eggs, that they be healthful food for your faithful who eat them in thanksgiving for the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you for ever and ever.



### Children and church at Easter

BEFORE you take your children to church during Holy Week and Easter, you should tell them about the ceremonies.

Your local parish may have made arrangements to instruct children. But in any case, you should tell your children about the palm procession, the washing of feet at the Mass of the Last Supper and the ceremonies of Good Friday and the Easter Vigil.

Do ensure that your children see that you, their parents, make going to church a top priority at Easter - and explain to them, in words they can understand, the reasons why.

*Salvator mundi, salva nos, qui per crucem et resurrectionem tuam liberasti nos*

*Save us, Saviour of the world, who by your cross and reurrection have set us free*



# Sunday Reflections

Reflections, readings and prayers for Mass on all the Sundays in April & May  
and for Holy Week & Easter

## 7th April 5th Sunday of Lent

*Are we ready?*

DURING the season of Lent we prepare for Easter by meditating on Christ's sufferings and death, which were the necessary prelude to his resurrection.



Now, on this Fifth Sunday of Lent, and in the two weeks to come, we endeavour to identify ourselves even more closely with Christ's suffering.

Today's ancient Collect reminds us that Christ, 'out of love for the world... handed himself over to death'. His sacrificial death offers salvation to us all - provided that, like the woman taken in adultery (in today's Gospel) we resolve to 'sin no more'.

In the Gospel we read how the Scribes and Pharisees came to Jesus hoping to trick him into contradicting the Law of Moses, which decreed that a woman taken in adultery should be stoned. Jesus was at first silent. Then he said, 'If there is anyone among you who has not sinned, let him cast the first stone.'

Jesus knows - and we cannot deny it - that all of us commit sin. We should hesitate to condemn others when we ourselves fall short of what God expects of us.

Today's Prayer over the Offerings asks God to 'graciously purify [us] by the workings of this sacrifice.' The sacrifice of the altar identifies us with Christ's sacrifice on the Cross. As St Paul wrote to the Philippians (today's second reading): 'Nothing... will outweigh the supreme advantage of knowing Christ as Lord... All I want to know is Christ and the power of his resurrection, and to share in his sufferings by reproducing the pattern of his death.'

*By tradition, from this Sunday until the Easter Vigil, crosses, pictures and statues in church are veiled.*

### Collect

BY your help, we beseech you, Lord our God, may we walk eagerly in that same charity with which, out of love for the world, you Son handed himself over to death...

**Readings:** Isaiah 43:16-21. Psalm 125:1-6. Response: What marvels the Lord worked for us! Indeed we were glad. Philippians 3:8-14. (*Alternative readings: see opposite.*)

**Gospel acclamation:** Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory! Seek good, and not evil, so that you may live, and that the Lord God of hosts may really be with you...

**Gospel:** John 6:1-11

### Prayer over the Offerings

HEAR us, almighty God, and, having installed in your servants the teachings of the Christian faith, graciously purify them by the working of this sacrifice...

### Preface

...For by your gracious gift each year your faithful await the sacred paschal feasts with the joy of minds made pure, so that, eagerly intent on prayer and on the works of charity, and participating in the mysteries in which they have been reborn, they may be led to the fullness of grace that you bestow on your sons and daughters...

*or*

...For you have given your children a sacred time for the renewing and purification of their hearts, that, freed from disordered affections, they may so deal with the things of this passing world so as to hold rather to the things that eternally endure...

### Prayer after Communion

WE pray, almighty God, that we may always be counted among the members of Christ, in whose Body and Blood we have communion...

### Prayer over the People

BLESS, O Lord, your people who long for the gift of your mercy, and grant that what, at your prompting, they desire, they may receive by your generous gift.

### Alternative Readings for the Fifth Sunday of Lent

Ezekiel 37:12-14. Psalm 130:1-8. Romans 8:8-11, *Alternative Gospel*, John 11:1-45, *which has its own Preface*: For as true man he wept for Lazarus his friend, and as eternal God raised him from the tomb, just as, taking pity on the human race, he leads us by sacred mysteries to new life...

Blessed  
Lord Jesus,



may this Holy Week be for us  
a time of enlightenment and refreshment,  
so that we may give you thanks  
and render you true service



## HOLY WEEK 2019

*14th April*

### Palm Sunday

*Humility, love and redemption*

WE interpret the Old Testament by what has been revealed in the New Testament. Thus, today's First Reading from Isaiah, applied to Christ, depicts him as a willing sufferer: 'I did not hide my face from insult and spitting.'

Whenever Jesus spoke to his disciples about his forthcoming death they didn't want to hear about it. We too, like the disciples, may not want to face up to Jesus' death, and the purpose of it.

Christ came into this world to humble himself, as today's Second Reading (from Philippians) reminds us. He offered himself to the Father for the sins of the world, including our own.

Today's long reading from the Gospel of St Luke is a narrative of Christ's suffering and death. Listening attentively, let us give thanks for God's love in sending his Son to take on himself all our sins and save us through his death and resurrection.

May we make the best use of this Holy Week for our own souls' sake, and that of others.

*The Mass is preceded by the Procession of Palms.*

*The priest explains: ...with all faith and devotion let us commemorate the Lord's entry into the city for our salvation, following in his footsteps...*

ALMIGHTY, ever-living God, sanctify + these branches with your blessing, that we, who follow Christ the King in exultation, may reach the eternal Jerusalem through him...

*An alternative prayer of blessing may be used.*

**Gospel before the Procession:** Luke 19:28-40

*During the procession antiphons and hymns are sung.*

**Collect**

ALMIGHTY, ever-living God, who as an example of humility for the human race to follow caused our Saviour to take flesh and submit to the Cross, graciously grant that we may heed his lesson of patient suffering, and so merit a share in his Resurrection...

**Readings:** Isaiah 50:4-7. Psalm 21:8-9,17-20,23-24. Response: My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Philippians 2:6-11.

**Gospel acclamation:** Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory! Christ was humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross. But God raised him high and gave him the name which is above all names...

**Passion Gospel:** Luke 22:14 – 23:56 (or Luke 23:1-49)

### Prayer over the Offerings

THROUGH the Passion of your Only-Begotten Son, O Lord, may our reconciliation with you be near at hand, so that, though we do not merit it by our own deeds, yet by this sacrifice, made once for all, we may feel already the effects of your mercy...

**Preface...** For, though innocent, he suffered willingly for sinners, and accepted unjust condemnation to save the guilty. His Death has washed away our sins, and his Resurrection has purchased our justification...

### Prayer after Communion

NOURISHED with these sacred gifts, we humbly beseech you, O Lord, that, just as through the Death of your Son you have taught us to hope for what we believe, so by his Resurrection you may lead us to where you call...

### Prayer over the People

LOOK, we pray, O Lord, on this your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ did not hesitate to be delivered into the hands of the wicked, and to submit to the agony of the Cross...

*15th April*

### Monday in Holy Week

*The colour from Monday to Wednesday (except for the Chrism Mass) is purple or violet.*

**Collect**

GRANT, we pray, almighty God, that though in our weakness we fail, we may be revived through the Passion of your Only Begotten Son...

**Readings:** Isaiah 42:1-7, Psalm 26:1-3,13-14. John 12:1-11.

### Prayer over the Offerings

LOOK graciously, O Lord, on the sacred mysteries we celebrate here, and may what you have mercifully provided to cancel the judgment we incurred bear for us fruit in eternal life...

**Preface** ...for the days of his saving Passion and glorious Resurrection are fast approaching, by which the pride of the ancient foe and the mystery of our redemption in Christ is accomplished...

### Prayer after Communion

VISIT your people, O Lord, we pray, and with your ever-watchful love look upon the hearts dedicated to you by means of these sacred mysteries, so that under your protection we may keep safe this remedy of eternal salvation, which by your mercy we have received...

*16th April*

### Tuesday in Holy Week

**Collect**

ALMIGHTY, ever-living God, grant us so to celebrate the mysteries of the Lord's Passion that we may merit to receive your pardon...

**Readings:** Isaiah 49:1-6. Psalm 70:1-6,15,17. John 13:21-33,36-38.

### Prayer over the Offerings

LOOK favourably, Lord, we pray, on these offerings of your family, and to those you make partakers of these sacred gifts, grant a share in their fullness...

**Preface:** *as yesterday (Monday of Holy Week)*

### Prayer after Communion

MAY your mercy, O God, cleanse the people that are subject to you from all seduction of former ways, and make them capable of new holiness...

## EVENING MASS of the CHRISM

in the Cathedral with the Bishop  
and Priests of the Diocese

*During this Mass, the priests renew their vows, and the holy oils are consecrated.*



- **The Oil of Catechumens**, used before a candidate is baptised

- **The Oil of the Sick**

- **The Oil of Chrism**, used at baptisms, ordinations, and the consecration of churches and altars

*The colour for this Mass is white.*

### Collect

O GOD, who anointed your only-begotten Son with the Holy Spirit, and made him Christ and Lord, graciously grant that, being made sharers in his consecration, we may

bear witness to your Redemption in the world...

**Readings:** Isaiah 61:1-3,6,8-9. Psalm 88:21-22,25,27.  
Response: I will sing for ever of your love, O Lord.  
Revelation 1:5-8.

**Gospel acclamation:** Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory! The spirit of the Lord has been given to me; he sent me to bring good news to the poor...

### Gospel: Luke 4:16-21

*After the homily, the Bishop addresses the priests, who in response renew the promises they made at their ordination.*

*The Bishop then asks the people to pray for their priests and for their Bishop.*

*Response:* Christ hear us, Christ, graciously hear us.

### Prayer over the Offerings

MAY the power of this sacrifice, Lord, we pray, mercifully wipe away what is old in us and increase in us grace of salvation and newness of life...

### Preface

...For, by the anointing of the Holy Spirit you made your Only-Begotten Son High Priest of the new and eternal covenant, and by your wondrous design were pleased to decree that his one Priesthood should continue in the Church.

For Christ not only adorns with a royal priesthood the people he has made his own, but with a brother's kindness he also chooses men to become sharers in his sacred ministry by the laying-on of hands.

They are to renew in his name the sacrifice of human redemption, to set before your people the paschal banquet, to lead your holy people in charity, to nourish them with the Word and strengthen them with the Sacraments.

As they give up their lives for you and for the salvation of their brothers and sisters, they strive to be conformed to the image of Christ himself, and offer you a constant witness of faith and love...

### Prayer after Communion

WE beseech you, almighty God, that those you renew by your Sacraments may merit to become the pleasing fragrance of Christ...

*After the Chrism Mass, the priests reverently take the Oils to their parishes, where they are reserved for use as needed.*

17th April

## Wednesday in Holy Week

*Today we remember the betrayal of Jesus by Judas Iscariot.*

### Collect

O GOD, who willed your Son to suffer for our sake to the yoke of the Cross, so that he might drive from us the power of the enemy, grant your servants to attain the grace of the Resurrection...

**Readings:** Isaiah 50:4-9. Psalm 68:8-10,21-22,31,33-34.  
Matthew 26:14-25.

### Prayer over the Offerings

RECEIVE, O Lord, we pray, the offerings made here, and graciously grant that, celebrating your Son's Passion in mystery, we may receive the grace of its effects...

**Preface:** as Monday of Holy Week, previous page

### Prayer after Communion

ENDOW us, almighty God, with the firm conviction that through your Son's death in time, to which the revered mysteries bear witness, we may be assured of eternal life...

## 18th April: Thursday morning of Holy Week

*No Mass is celebrated this morning.*

## THE EASTER TRIDUUM

### Evening of Thursday 18th April



## MASS of the LORD'S SUPPER

*This Mass commemorates Christ's institution of the Eucharist and his 'new commandment' of love.*

*The tabernacle is empty. The priest wears white vestments. While the Gloria in Excelsis is sung, church bells may be rung. They will not be rung again until the Gloria at the Vigil on Saturday evening.*

### Collect

O GOD, who has called us to participate in this most sacred Supper, in which your Only-Begotten Son, when about to hand himself over to death, entrusted to the Church a sacrifice new for all eternity, the banquet of his love: grant, we pray, that we may draw from so great a mystery the fullness of charity and of life...

**Readings:** Exodus 12:1-8,11-14. Psalm 115;12-13,15-18.  
Response: The blessing cup that we bless is a communion with the blood of Christ. 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.

**Gospel acclamation:** Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus! I give you a new commandment, that you should love one another as I have loved you, says the Lord...

**Gospel:** John 13:1-15

*Following the homily, the priest washes the feet of selected members of the congregation, while suitable songs are sung.*

**Prayer over the Offerings**

GRANT us, O Lord, we pray, that we may participate worthily in these mysteries, for whenever the memorial of this sacrifice is celebrated, the work of our redemption is accomplished...

**Preface**

For he is the true and eternal Priest, who instituted the pattern of an everlasting sacrifice, and was the first to offer himself as the saving Victim, commanding us to make this offering as his memorial. As we eat his Flesh that was sacrificed for us, and as we drink his Blood that was poured for us, we are washed clean...

**Prayer after Communion**

GRANT, almighty God, that just as we are renewed by the Supper of your Son in this present age, so we may enjoy his banquet for all eternity...

*After the Mass, the Blessed Sacrament is solemnly transferred to the Altar of Repose, while the hymn Pange Lingua is sung. Members of the faithful keep watch before the Blessed Sacrament until midnight.*

## 19th April Good Friday

*Day of obligatory fasting and abstinence*



*At the beginning of the Solemn Liturgy, the altar is bare. The priest, in red vestments, prostrates himself before the altar before going to his place for the Collect.*

**Collect**

REMEMBER your mercies, O Lord, and with your eternal protection sanctify your servants for whom Christ your Son, by the shedding of his Blood, established the Paschal mystery...

*An alternative Collect may be used.*

**Readings:** Isaiah 32:13-33. Psalm 30:2,6,12-13. Response: Father, into your hands I commend my spirit. Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9.

**Gospel acclamation**

Glory and praise to you. O Christ! Christ was humbler yet, even accepting death, death on a cross, but God raised him high, and gave him the name that is above all names.

**Passion Gospel:** John 18:1 – 19:42.

**The Solemn Intercessions**

- 1 For the Church
- 2 For the Pope
- 3 For the faithful
- 4 For catechumens
- 5 For the unity of Christians
- 6 For the Jewish people
- 7 For those who do not believe in Christ
- 8 For those who do not believe in God
- 9 For those in public office
- 10 For those in tribulation

**The Veneration of the Cross**

*The priest partly unveils the veiled cross, and begins the invitation: Behold the wood of the Cross, on which hung the salvation of the world.*

*The people kneel, and respond: Come, let us adore.*

*The priest uncovers the right arm of the cross, with the same invitation and response. Then he unveils the entire cross, with the invitation and response.*

*The people come forward and venerate the cross, one by one. During the veneration the singing usually includes the Reproaches – ancient chants of rebuke for our unfaithfulness and ingratitude. The hymn Pange Lingua ('Sing, my tongue, the glorious battle') may also be sung.*

*After the veneration, the cross is placed on the altar, which has been covered with a white cloth. The Blessed Sacrament is carried from the Altar of Repose and placed on the altar. The priest genuflects and begins the Our Father and the usual Communion Rite.*

**Prayer after Communion**

ALMIGHTY, ever-living God, who have restored us to life by the blessed Death and Resurrection of your Christ, preserve us in the work of your mercy, that by partaking of this mystery, we may live a life unceasingly devoted to you...

**Prayer over the People**

MAY abundant blessing, Lord, we pray, descend upon your people, who have honoured the Death of your Son in the hope of resurrection: may pardon come, comfort be given, holy faith increase, and everlasting redemption be made secure...

20th April

## Holy Saturday

*No Mass is celebrated this morning, though devotional services may be held. We are strongly recommended to extend the fast of Good Friday throughout Holy Saturday, when the Church waits, as it were, at the Lord's tomb. In this way the Easter Vigil will be all the more joyful.*

We glory in your Cross, O Lord,  
and praise you for your mighty  
Resurrection,  
for by virtue of your Cross  
joy has come into our world.

Saturday evening,  
20th April

## THE EASTER VIGIL



THE EASTER VIGIL is the greatest observance of the Christian year - the 'Solemnity of Solemnities' and the 'foretaste of the everlasting Easter'

*The Vigil begins after nightfall on Saturday evening.*

*There are four parts to the Easter Vigil:*

- THE SERVICE OF LIGHT
- THE LITURGY OF THE WORD
- THE LITURGY OF BAPTISM
- THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

### THE SERVICE OF LIGHT

*The 'new fire' is blessed outside the church. After greeting the people, the priest, in white vestments, prepares the Paschal Candle, and lights it from the new fire.*

*During the procession in the darkened church which follows, the priest three times holds the Paschal Candle high, and sings, 'Christ our Light', to which the people, kneeling, respond, 'Thanks be to God (or 'Lumen Christi', 'Deo gratias')'. The people carry candles, lit from the Paschal Candle.*

*The Paschal Candle is placed in the sanctuary, and the deacon or priest sings the Exsultet, the ancient Easter proclamation unique to this vigil: '...This is the night when Christ broke the chains of death, and rose triumphant from the grave!'*

### THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

*In the readings from Scripture, the Church, 'beginning with Moses and all the prophets', proclaims Christ's paschal mystery.*

The seven readings are:

- 1 Genesis 1:1 - 2:2 (God our Creator)
- 2 Genesis 22:1-18 (Abraham's obedience)
- 3 Exodus 14:15 - 15:1 (Moses leads the Israelites out of Egypt)
- 4 Isaiah 54:5-14 (God's everlasting love)
- 5 Isaiah 55:1-11 (God's mercy and forgiveness)
- 6 Baruch 3:9-15 & 32 - 4:4 (Israel exhorted to walk in God's ways)
- 7 Ezekiel 36:16-28 (We are God's people)

*Some of these readings may be omitted, but the third reading - from Exodus - is always proclaimed.*

*After the Old Testament readings, the altar candles are lit, and the priest intones the Gloria in Excelsis. Church bells are rung.*

#### Collect

O GOD, who made this most sacred night radiant with the glory of the Lord's Resurrection, stir up in your Church a spirit of adoption, so that, renewed in body and mind, we may render you undivided service...

**Epistle:** Romans 6:3-11. Psalm 117:1-2,16-17,22-23.  
Response: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

**Gospel:** Matthew 28:1-10.

### THE LITURGY OF BAPTISM

*If there are any to be baptised, the Litany of the Saints is sung, and the priest blesses the water in the font. When the rite of Baptism (and Confirmation) has been completed, or if there is no baptism, after the blessing of the water, all stand with lighted candles and renew their baptismal promises.*

*The priest sprinkles the people with holy water while the antiphon Vidi aquam ('I saw water', Exodus 47-1-2, 9) is sung.*

### THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

#### Prayer over the Offerings

ACCEPT, we ask, O Lord, the prayers of your people with the sacrificial offerings, that what is begun in the paschal mysteries, may, by the working of your power, bring us to the healing of eternity...

#### Preface:

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, at all times to acclaim you, O Lord, but on this night above all to laud you yet more gloriously, when Christ our Passover has been sacrificed. For he is the true Lamb who has taken away the sins of the world. By dying he has destroyed our death, and by rising, restored our life. Therefore, overcome with paschal joy, every people exults in your praise, and even the heavenly powers, with the angelic hosts, sing together the unending hymn of your glory, as they acclaim...

#### Prayer after Communion

POUR out on us, O Lord, the Spirit of your love, and in your kindness make those you have nourished by this paschal Sacrament one in mind and heart...

21st April

## EASTER SUNDAY

*'We are witnesses!'*

'WE are witnesses!' cried St Peter, when he and his fellow apostles proclaimed the Good News of the Resurrection to everyone who would listen.

After Christ's death, the apostles had been laid low by shock and fear. But - as today's reading from Acts relates - the Resurrection and the descent of the Holy Spirit made them new men: eager, articulate and fearless. For them, as St Paul declares in today's second reading, 'Christ is your life.'

Today's Gospel reading tells how Mary Magdalene arrived at the tomb of Jesus before daybreak, found it empty, and ran to tell Peter and John that his body had been taken away.

Peter and John ran to the tomb, and seeing the burial clothes, were catapulted into belief: yes, this resurrection on the third day was what Jesus had told them about! John 'saw and believed'.

Christ's resurrection is not just a pious belief. It is not just a doctrine. It is a fact - the most wonderful fact of life that we can ever know. Christ is alive!

We encounter the risen Christ in our hearts. We meet him in the Church's prayer and worship. Like Our Lord's first followers, let us shout for joy, and tell all the world.





**Collect**

O GOD, who on this day through your Only-Begotten Son have conquered death and unlocked for us the gate of eternity, grant, we pray, that we who keep the Solemnity of the Lord's Resurrection may, through the renewal brought by your Spirit, rise up in the light of life..

**Readings:** Acts 10:34,37-43. Psalm 117:1-2,15-17,22-23.  
Response: This day was made by the Lord; we rejoice and are glad (or Alleluia). Colossians 3:1-4 or 1 Corinthians 5:6-8.

**Sequence: Victimae paschali**

Christians, to the Paschal Victim offer sacrifice and praise. The sheep are ransomed by the Lamb; and Christ, the undefiled, hath sinners to his Father reconciled.

Death with life contended: combat strangely ended!

Life's own Champion slain, yet lives to reign.

Tell us, Mary: say what thou didst see upon the way.

The tomb the Living didst enclose; I saw Christ's glory as he rose!

The angels there attesting, shroud with grave-clothes resting,

Christ, my hope, has risen: he goes before you into Galilee.

That Christ is truly risen from the dead, we know.

Victorious King, thy mercy show!

**Latin version**

*Victimae paschali laudes immolent Christiani.*

*Agnus redemit oves: Christus innocens Patri reconciliavit peccatores.*

*Mors et vita duello conflixere mirando: dux vitae mortuus, regnat vivus.*

*Dic nobis Maria, quid vidisti in via?*

*Sepulcrum Christi viventis, et gloriam vidi resurgentis:*

*Angelicis testes, sudarium, et vestes. Surrexit Christus spes mea: praecedet suos [vos] in Galilaeam.*

*Credendum est magis soli Mariae veraci Quam Judaeorum Turbae fallaci.*

*Scimus Christum surrexisse a mortuis vere:*

*tu nobis, victor Rex miserere!*

**Gospel acclamation:** Alleluia... Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us; let us celebrate the feast, then, in the Lord.

**Gospel:** John 20:1-9 (or Mark 16:1-8, or at an evening Mass, Luke 24:13-35)

**Prayer over the Offerings**

Exultant with paschal gladness, O Lord, we offer the sacrifice by which your Church is wonderfully reborn and nourished...

**Preface**

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, at all times to proclaim you, O Lord, but on this day above all to laud you yet more gloriously, when Christ our Passover has been sacrificed. For he is the true Lamb who has taken away the sins of the world. By dying he has destroyed our death, and by rising restored our life. Therefore, overcome with paschal joy, every land, every people exults in your praises, and even the heavenly Powers, with the angelic hosts, sing together the unending hymn of your glory, as they acclaim...

**Prayer after Communion**

LOOK upon your Church, O Lord, with unfailing love and favour, so that, renewed by the paschal victory, she may come to the glory of the Resurrection...

*28th April*  
**2nd Sunday  
of Easter Time**  
**(‘Divine Mercy’)**

*‘My Lord and my God!’*

‘THE MEN and women who came to believe in the Lord increased steadily’ - that is, they came to believe in Jesus’ resurrection.

We’re told this in today’s first reading; and then, in the second reading (which comes from Revelation) we hear Jesus’ proclamation: ‘I am the Alpha and Omega, the Living One.’

Today’s Gospel tells how Jesus appeared to his apostles on the very evening of his resurrection. He appeared without any need for the doors to be opened. To dispel any impression that he was a ghost, he showed them his wounded hands and side. He greeted them: ‘Peace be with you’ (which may remind us of the beautiful salutation, *Salaam aleikum*).

Jesus’ greeting dispelled the fear and shame the apostles must have been feeling for behaving so disloyally during their Master’s sufferings. Jesus now restored the intimacy between himself and his apostles. And he went on to ‘breathe on them’, bestowing on the apostles the power to forgive sins in his name - the power he has given to all his priests to this very day.

The scene switches to a week later. Once again, the apostles were assembled. Thomas was there (he had been absent the

**EASTER PREFACES**

**Preface I:** see *Easter Sunday, opposite page*

**Preface II** ...Through him the children of light rise to eternal life, and the halls of the heavenly kingdom are thrown open to the faithful; for his Death is our ransom from death, and in his rising the life of all has risen. Therefore, overcome with paschal joy, every land, every people, exults in your praise...

**Preface III** ...He never ceases to offer himself for us, but defends us and ever pleads our cause before you; he is the sacrificial Victim who dies no more, the Lamb, once slain, who lives for ever. Therefore, overcome with paschal joy, every land, every people, exults in your praise...

**Preface IV**...For, with the old order destroyed, a universe cast down is renewed, and integrity of life is restored to us in Christ. Therefore, overcome with paschal joy, every land, every people, exults in your praise...

**Preface V** ...By the oblation of his Body, he brought the sacrifices of old to fulfilment in the reality of the Cross, and by commending himself to you for our salvation, showed himself the Priest, the Altar, and the Lamb of sacrifice. Therefore, overcome with paschal joy, every land, every people, exults in your praise...

week before). He was saying he wouldn't believe that Jesus had broken the power of death unless he could see the marks of the nails in Jesus' hands. Jesus appeared, and showed Thomas his hands. Thomas at once cried out: 'My Lord and my God!'

In our hearts at Mass we echo Thomas when the priest raises the Host: 'My Lord and my God!' We have not yet seen the risen Jesus face-to-face, but we encounter him at the altar and in those we love and those we meet day by day.

**Collect**

GOD of everlasting mercy, who, in the very re-occurrence of the paschal feast kindle the faith of the people you have made your own, increase, we pray, the grace you have bestowed; that all may grasp and rightly understand in what font they have been washed, by whose Spirit they have been reborn, by whose Blood they have been redeemed...

**Readings:** Acts 5:12-16. Psalm 118:2-4,22-27. Response: Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his love has no end. Revelation 1:9-13,17-19.

**Gospel acclamation:** Alleluia...Jesus said, 'You believe because you can see me. Happy are those who have not seen, and yet believe...

**Gospel:** John 20:19-31

**Prayer over the Offerings**

ACCEPT, O Lord, we pray, the oblations of your people, that, renewed by confession of your name and by Baptism, they may attain everlasting happiness...

**Preface:** ...in this time, above all to laud you yet more gloriously, when Christ our Passover has been sacrificed. For he is the true Lamb who has taken away the sins of the world; by dying he has destroyed our death, and by rising, restored our life. Therefore, overcome by paschal joy, every land, every people exults in your praise...

**Prayer after Communion**

GRANT, we pray, almighty God, that our reception of this paschal Sacrament may have a continuing effect in our minds and hearts...

*5th May*

**3rd Sunday of Easter Time**

*'It is the Lord!'*

LIKE their Master and Lord Jesus, the apostles suffered (though less absolutely) for proclaiming the Kingdom.

Jesus had empowered the apostles to tell the good news to everyone - and for this they were arrested. 'We are witnesses,' Peter told the High Priest, when he and other disciples were accused of teaching people about Jesus.

The authorities warned the apostles not to preach any more in the name of Jesus, and then released them. The apostles were 'glad to have had the honour of suffering humiliation for the sake of Jesus' name'.

The apostles were glad, as earlier they'd been glad to find their risen Master by the Lake of Tiberius. They'd kept together, as Jesus had instructed them, and gone back to their



old job of fishing. When they found Jesus having breakfast, Peter cried, 'It is the Lord!' Joyfully, he leapt from the boat into the lake. That's the sort of enthusiasm we all need!

Then Peter was tested. Just as he'd denied Jesus three times during his Master's trial, so now Jesus asked him three times, 'Simon, son of John, do you love me?' Peter put himself into Jesus' hands: 'Lord, you know I love you.'

Like Peter, each of us should say to Jesus, from the heart: 'Lord, I love you.'

**Collect**

MAY your people exult for ever, O God, in renewed youthfulness of spirit, so that, rejoicing now in the restored glory of our adoption, we may look forward in confident hope to the rejoicing of the day of resurrection...

**Readings:** Acts 5:27-32,40-41. Psalm 29:2,4-6,11-13. Response: I will praise you, Lord; you have rescued me. Revelation 5:11-14.

**Gospel acclamation:** Alleluia... Lord Jesus, explain the scriptures to us. May our hearts burn within us as you talk to us.

**Gospel:** John 21:1-4

**Prayer over the Offerings**

RECEIVE, O Lord, we pray, these offerings of your exultant Church, and as you have given her cause for such great gladness, grant also that the gifts we bring may bear fruit in perpetual happiness...

**Easter Preface:** *the priest may choose any of the five Easter Prefaces (see bottom of previous page)*

**Prayer after Communion**

LOOK with kindness upon your people, O Lord, and grant, we pray, that those you were pleased to renew by eternal mysteries may attain in their flesh the incorruptible glory of the resurrection...

*12th May*

**4th Sunday of Easter Time**

*The Good Shepherd*

OUR Sunday Gospel readings since Easter Sunday have told of Jesus' appearances to the apostles



after his resurrection. Now, on this fourth Sunday, we consider Jesus as the Good Shepherd.

In the Old Testament God himself was named as the shepherd of his chosen people. Kings and priests were also described as shepherds or pastors. So when, as related in St John's Gospel, Jesus spoke of himself as the shepherd, the gate to the sheepfold, and the shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep, the apostles would have understood.

Jesus, as told in today's Gospel, assured all his hearers that as the Good Shepherd he knew each one of his followers, and gave them eternal life. We do well to read the whole of St John chapter 10 before or after today's Mass. And we should pray especially today for our shepherds Pope Francis, Bishop Gabriel and the priests of our diocese. We pray, too, for vocations to the priesthood and the religious life. We pray for ourselves, that whatever our personal vocation we may follow Christ faithfully, and so enter the eternal life he has promised us.

**Collect**

ALMIGHTY ever-living God, lead us to a share in the joys of heaven, so that the humble flock may reach where the brave Shepherd has gone before...

**Readings:** Acts 13:14,43-52. Psalm 98:1-3,5. Response: We are his people, the sheep of his flock. Revelation 7:9, 14-17.

**Gospel acclamation:** Alleluia...I am the good shepherd, says the Lord; I know my sheep and my own know me...

**Gospel:** John 10:27-30

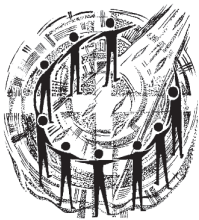
**Prayer over the Offerings**

GRANT, we pray, O Lord, that we may always find delight in these paschal mysteries, so that the renewal constantly at work within us may be the cause of our unending joy...

**Easter Preface:** *the priest may choose any of the five Easter Prefaces (see bottom of page 17)*

**Prayer after Communion**

LOOK upon your flock, kind Shepherd, and be pleased to settle in eternal pastures the sheep you have redeemed through the Precious Blood of your Son...



### 19th May 5th Sunday of Easter Time

*The new commandment*

ST JOHN devotes chapters 13 to 17 of his Gospel to recounting Jesus' teaching at the Last Supper. The Gospel readings on these three last

Sundays of Easter Time come from this teaching. Today we hear how Jesus told his disciples that he was giving them a new commandment. They were to love one another.

Love of neighbour had already been commanded in the Old Testament (Leviticus 19:18). And the love of neighbour ordered in the Law of Moses did also in some way extend to one's enemies (Exodus 23:4-5). So what was 'new' about Jesus' commandment?

Jesus told the disciples to love one another as he had loved them. And Jesus' love was unconditional: absolutely limitless. On the cross, his love embraced even his enemies. Yes: Jesus commands us to love those who don't love us, even our enemies (Matthew 5:43-44).

No doubt it seems impossible to follow Jesus entirely in this respect. Like most people - Christian or otherwise - we put our own safety, our own needs, our own pleasures, before the safety, needs and pleasures of others. We may love others in a theoretical way, we may try to 'forgive those who trespass against us', but in practical, everyday ways we're often selfish and even resentful.

If we want to obey Christ we have to learn, maybe the hard way, that the journey towards the Father demands love and sacrifice on our part. May the saints encourage us. Many of them had to learn the hard way.

As early as the 2nd century, the writer Tertullian remarked that people who saw how Christians lived could declare, 'See how they love one another!'

Is that how other people see us Christians as we leave church after Mass? How they see us in our family circle? How they see us in the neighbourhood? How they see us in our place of work?

**Collect**

ALMIGHTY ever-living God, constantly accomplish the Paschal Mystery within us, that those you were pleased to make new in Holy Baptism may, under your protective care, bear much fruit, and come to the joys of life eternal...

**Readings:** Acts 14:21-27. Psalm 144:8-13. Response: I will bless you name for ever, O God my King. Revelation 21:1-5.

**Gospel acclamation:** Alleluia...Jesus said, I give you a new commandment: love one another, just as I have loved you...

**Prayer over the Offerings**

O GOD, who by the wonderful exchange effected in this sacrifice has made us partakers of the one supreme Godhead, grant, we pray, that as we have come to know your truth, we may make it ours by a worthy way of life...

**Easter Preface:** *the priest may choose any of the five Easter Prefaces (see bottom of page 17)*

**Prayer after Communion**

GRACIOUSLY be present to your people, we pray, O Lord, and lead those you have imbued with heavenly mysteries to pass from former ways to newness of life...

### Wednesday evening, 29th May Vigil of the Ascension

**Collect**

O GOD, whose Son today ascended to the heavens as the apostles looked on, grant, we pray that in accordance with his promise we may be worthy for him to live with us always on earth, and we with him in heaven...

**Readings, Gospel acclamation and Gospel as in the Ascension Day Mass, next page.**

**Prayer over the Offerings**

O GOD, whose only-begotten Son, our High Priest, is seated ever-living at your right hand to intercede for us, grant that we may approach with confidence the throne of grace and there obtain your mercy...

**Preface as for Ascension Day Mass, next page.**

**Prayer after Communion**

MAY the gifts we have received from your altar, Lord, kindle in our hearts a longing for the heavenly homeland, and cause us to press forward, following in our Saviour's footsteps to the place where for our sake he entered before us...

**Collect**

O GOD, whose Son today ascended to the heavens as the apostles looked on, grant, we pray that in accordance with his promise we may be worthy for him to live with us always on earth, and we with him in heaven...

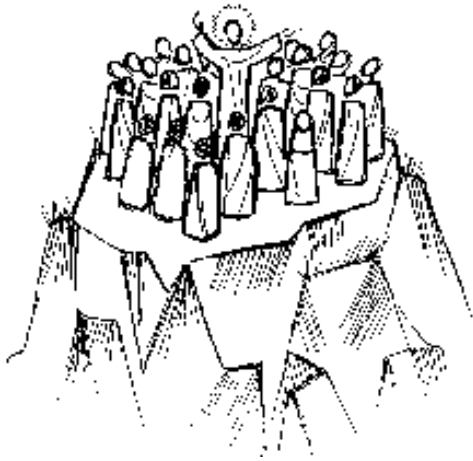
**Readings, Gospel acclamation and Gospel: as in the Ascension Day Mass, opposite column**

**Prayer over the Offerings**

O GOD, whose only-begotten Son, our High Priest, is seated ever-living at your right hand to intercede for us, grant that we may approach with confidence the throne of grace and there obtain your mercy...

**Preface as for Ascension Day Mass, opposite.**





Thursday 30th May

## The ASCENSION of THE LORD

ASCENSION Day comes forty days after Easter Sunday (though in some dioceses it is celebrated on the following Sunday). At the Last Supper, and after his resurrection, Jesus promised his apostles the gift of the Spirit. Then, forty days after the resurrection, 'he parted from them' (Mark 16:19; Luke 24:51).

Ascension Day celebrates this earthly parting of Jesus and his exaltation to the right hand of the Father. He had assured his little band of followers, 'Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow me afterwards.' (John 13:36). He went on to say: 'If I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, so that where I am you may be also.' (John 13:36).

Jesus' ascension was an essential element in God's saving plan for all mankind. *Ascension Day is therefore a holy day of obligation.*

### Collect

GLADDEN us with holy joys, almighty God, and make us rejoice with devout thanksgiving; for the Ascension of Christ your Son is our exaltation, and where the Head has gone before in glory, the Body is called to follow in hope...

or

GRANT, we pray, almighty God, that we, who believe that your Only Begotten Son, our Redeemer, ascended this day to the heavens, may in spirit dwell already in heavenly realms...

**Readings:** Acts 1:11. Psalm 46:2-3,6-9. Response: God goes up with shouts of joy; the Lord goes up with trumpet blast. Hebrews 9:24-28; 10:19-23 (or Ephesians 1:17-23).

**Gospel acclamation:** Alleluia...Go, make disciples of all nations. I am with you always, even to the end of time.

**Gospel:** Luke 21:46-53

### Prayer over the Offerings

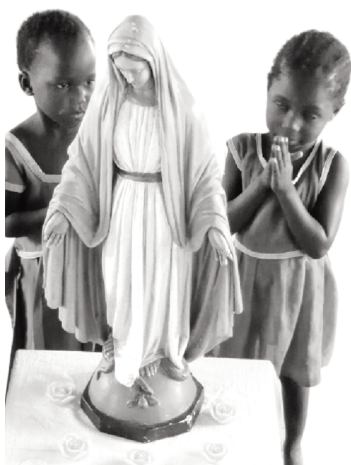
WE offer sacrifice now in supplication, O Lord, to honour the wondrous Ascension of your Son: grant, we pray, that through this most holy exchange we, too, may rise up to the heavenly realms...

**Preface...** for the Lord Jesus, the King of glory, conqueror of sin and death, ascended to the highest heavens, as the angels gazed in wonder. Mediator between God and man, Judge of the world and Lord of hosts, he ascended, not to distance himself from our lowly state, but that we, his members, might be confident of following where he, our Head and Founder, has gone before...

or... for after his Resurrection he plainly appeared to all his disciples and was taken up to heaven in their sight, that he might make us sharers in his divinity...

### Prayer after Communion

ALMIGHTY ever-living God, who allow those on earth to celebrate divine mysteries, grant, we pray, that Christian hope may draw us onward to where our nature is united with you...



## May is the Month of Mary

MAY is traditionally a month devoted to Mary, Mother of Jesus. This fits well with Easter Time, because Mary represents humanity raised to the glory of heaven with her risen Son.

Throughout Easter Time (21st April to 8th June), instead of the *Angelus*, we say the *Regina Caeli*:

### Regina Caeli

Queen of heaven, rejoice, alleluia!  
for he whom you were worthy to bear, alleluia!  
has risen as he said, alleluia!  
Pray for us to God, alleluia!  
Let us pray:

O GOD, who through the resurrection of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, did vouchsafe to give joy to the world; grant, we beseech you, that through his Mother, the Virgin Mary, we may obtain the joys of everlasting life. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Latin version

### Regina Caeli

*Regina caeli laetare, alleluia.*

*Quia quem meruisti portare, alleluia.*

*Resurrexit, sicut dixit, alleluia.*

*Ora pro nobis Deum, alleluia.*

*Gaude et laetare, Virgo Maria, alleluia.*

*Quia surrexit Dominus vere, alleluia.*

*Orémus:*

*DEUS, qui per resurrectionem Filii tui Domini nostri Iesu Christi mundum laetificare dignatus es, praesta, quaesumus, ut per eius Genetricem Virginem Mariam perpetuae capiamus gaudia vitae. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.*



## Pious practices

**Many devotional practices in the Church are so habitual that we don't think about them. But whenever we make the sign of the Cross, for instance, or dip our fingers into holy water, we should do so in awareness of what the action means.**

**We shouldn't perform such actions to impress others or to tell ourselves how holy and good we are.**

**We perform them to honour God and our membership of his Church.**

### Church bells



BELLS are rung to signify the time for worshippers to go to church; and small bells are used during the liturgy.

The ringing of bells from a church bell tower corresponds to the Islamic tradition of the *adhan* from a minaret.

Many Catholic and some Anglican churches ring a bell three times a day at 6 am, noon and 6 pm, reminding the faithful to recite the Angelus, the prayer in honour of the Incarnation.

Bells are rung in celebration after a wedding. The ringing of a bell to announce a death is called a 'death knell'. A bell is sounded after a funeral as the coffin leaves the church, or is interred.

The only time when bells are not rung is from Maundy Thursday until the Easter Vigil.

In small communities, before modern communications, church bells were the common way to call the community together for all purposes, secular as well as sacred.

### Altar bells

During the Mass, a small hand-bell or set of such bells (called altar bells or sanctus bells) is rung shortly before the consecration, and again when the Host is shown to the people.

The term 'sanctus bell' also refers to a bell in a church tower rung at the Sanctus and again at the elevation of the elements, to indicate to those not present in the building that the moment of consecration has been reached.

### How bells are made and hung

A church bell consists of a cup-shaped metal resonator with a flared, thickened rim and a metal clapper inside. It is usually mounted in a bell tower so that it can be heard by the surrounding community. The bell is suspended from a horizontal axle so it can swing from side to side. A rope is tied to a pulley on the axle, and hangs down to ground level. To ring the bell, the bell-ringer pulls on the rope, swinging the bell. The motion causes the clapper to hit the inside rim of the bell as it swings, making the sound.

### 'Baptism'

In the Catholic Church, bells are 'baptised'. The bishop washes the bell with holy water, anoints it outside with the oil of the sick and inside with the oil of chrism. A censer is placed under it, and the bishop prays that the sound of the bell will put demons to flight, protect from storms, and call the faithful to prayer.

Among churches with bells in the Diocese of Banjul are the Cathedral and Holy Spirit Church in Banjul; St Therese's and Blessed Sacrament, Kanifing; Star of the Sea, Bakau; St Peter's, Lamin; Christ the King, Darsilami; and St Martin's, Kartong.



### ? Question Box

**MOST of my friends aren't practising Christians. Even those who are church-goers seldom talk about religion, and most of my other friends don't go to any church.**

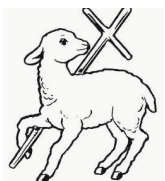
**I know I should witness to Christ. But how can I do so without embarrassment, and perhaps boring or alienating some of my friends?**

THERE are probably more times than you realise when you can speak plainly about what you believe. But you are right that referring to religion won't always help you or the Church.

You do, however, have one clear duty: that is, to witness by example. If you always speak the truth, behave honourably and try to be helpful and generous to others, you're living a Christian life. Some of your friends, even if you don't refer directly to your faith, will attribute your behaviour to the religion you profess.

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI put it like this: 'A Christian knows when it is time to speak of God, and when it is better to say nothing and let love alone speak. He knows that God's presence is felt at the very time when the only thing we do is to love.'

*From the encyclical letter of Benedict XVI, 'Deus caritas est'.*



THE EDITOR & STAFF of *THE DIOCESE of BANJUL NEWSLETTER*  
wish all our Readers

A DEVOUT HOLY WEEK and a JOYFUL EASTER



*For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God' (Romans 8:19)*

EACH year, through Mother Church, God 'gives us this joyful season when we prepare to celebrate the paschal mystery with mind and heart renewed... as we recall the great events that gave us new life in Christ.' (Preface of Lent I).

We can thus journey from Easter to Easter towards the fulfilment of the salvation we have already received as a result of Christ's paschal mystery – 'for in hope we were saved' (Romans 8:24). This mystery of salvation, already at work in us during our earthly lives, is a dynamic process that also embraces history and all of creation. As St Paul says, 'the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God' (Romans 8:19). In this perspective, I would like to offer a few reflections to accompany our journey of conversion this Lent.

### **The redemption of creation**

The celebration of the Paschal Triduum of Christ's passion, death and resurrection, the culmination of the liturgical year, calls us yearly to undertake a journey of preparation, in the knowledge that our being conformed to Christ (Romans 8:29) is a priceless gift of God's mercy.

When we live as children of God, redeemed, led by the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:14) and capable of acknowledging and obeying God's law, beginning with the law written on our hearts and in nature, we also benefit creation by cooperating in its redemption. That is why St Paul says that creation eagerly longs for the revelation of the children of God; in other words, that all those who enjoy the grace of Jesus' paschal mystery may experience its fulfilment in the redemption of the human body itself.

When the love of Christ transfigures the lives of the saints in spirit, body and soul, they give praise to God. Through prayer, contemplation and art, they also include other creatures in that praise, as we see admirably expressed in the 'Canticle of the Creatures' by St Francis of Assisi (*Laudato Si'* 87).

Yet in this world, the harmony generated by redemption is constantly threatened by the negative power of sin and death.

Indeed, when we fail to live as children of God, we often behave in a destructive way towards our neighbours and other creatures – and ourselves as well – since we begin to

## From desert to garden

### **The message of POPE FRANCIS for Lent 2019**

think more or less consciously that we can use them as we will. Intemperance then takes the upper hand: we start to live a life that exceeds those limits imposed by our human condition and nature itself. We yield to those untrammelled desires that the Book of Wisdom sees as typical of the ungodly, those who act without thought for God or hope for the future (Wisdom 2:1-11). Unless we tend constantly towards Easter, towards the horizon of the Resurrection, the mentality expressed in the slogans 'I want it all and I want it now!' and 'Too much is never enough', gains the upper hand.

The root of all evil, as we know, is sin, which from its first appearance has disrupted our communion with God, with others and with creation itself, to which we are linked in a particular way by our body.

This rupture of communion with God likewise undermines our harmonious relationship with the environment in which we are called to live, so that the garden has become a wilderness (Genesis 3:17-18). Sin leads man to consider himself the god of creation, to see himself as its absolute master and to use it, not for the purpose willed by the Creator but for his own interests, to the detriment of other creatures.

Once God's law, the law of love, is forsaken, then the law of the strong over the weak takes over. The sin that lurks in the human heart (Mark 7:20-23) takes the shape of greed and unbridled pursuit of comfort, lack of concern for the good of others and even of oneself. It leads to the exploitation of creation, both persons and the environment, due to that insatiable covetousness which sees every desire as a right and sooner or later destroys all those in its grip.

### **The healing power of repentance and forgiveness**

Creation urgently needs the revelation of the children of

God, who have been made 'a new creation'. For 'if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away; behold, the new has come' (2 Corinthians 5:17). Indeed, by virtue of their being revealed, creation itself can celebrate a Pasch, opening itself to a new heaven and a new earth (Revelation 21:1). The path to Easter demands that we renew our faces and hearts as Christians through repentance, conversion and forgiveness, so as to

live fully the abundant grace of the paschal mystery.

This 'eager longing', this expectation of all creation, will be fulfilled in the revelation of the children of God, that is, when Christians and all people enter decisively into the 'travail' that conversion entails. All creation is called, with us, to go forth 'from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God' (Romans 8:21).

Lent is a sacramental sign of this conversion. It invites Christians to embody the paschal mystery more deeply and concretely in their personal, family and social lives, above all

**'The path to Easter demands that we renew our faces and hearts as Christians through repentance, conversion and forgiveness, so as to live fully the abundant grace of the paschal mystery'**

by fasting, prayer and almsgiving. Fasting, that is, learning to change our attitude towards others and all of creation, turning away from the temptation to 'devour' everything to satisfy our voracity and being ready to suffer for love, which can fill the emptiness of our hearts. Prayer, which teaches us to abandon idolatry and the self-sufficiency of our ego, and to acknowledge our need of the Lord and his mercy. Almsgiving, whereby we escape from the insanity of hoarding everything for ourselves in the illusory belief that we can secure a future that does not belong to us. And thus to rediscover the joy of God's plan for creation and for each of us, which is to love him, our brothers and sisters, and the entire world, and to find in this love our true happiness.

Dear brothers and sisters, the 'lenten' period of forty days spent by the Son of God in the desert of creation had the goal of making it once more that garden of communion with

God that it was before original sin (Mark 1:12-13; Isaiah 51:3). May our Lent this year be a journey along that same path, bringing the hope of Christ also to creation, so that it may be 'set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God' (Romans 8:21). Let us not allow this season of grace to pass in vain!

Let us ask God to help us set out on a path of true conversion.

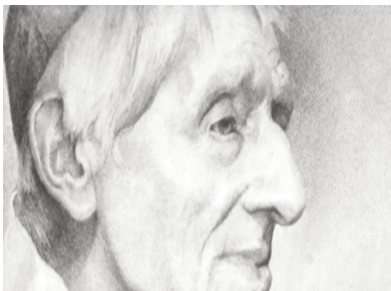
Let us leave behind our selfishness and self-absorption, and turn to Jesus' Pasch.

Let us stand beside our brothers and sisters in need, sharing our spiritual and material goods with them. In this way, by concretely welcoming Christ's victory over sin and death into our lives, we will also radiate its transforming power to all of creation. *From the Vatican, 4th October 2018, Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi.*



## from beyond the diocese

### Blessed John Henry Newman to be canonised



POPE Francis has confirmed the authentication of a miracle attributed to Blessed John Henry Newman, a 19th-century English theologian and priest.

The miracle which Pope Francis has authenticated occurred

when a pregnant woman suffering a haemorrhage asked Newman to pray for her; and the haemorrhage ceased immediately.

The date for John Henry Newman's canonisation - being listed as a Catholic saint - is yet to be announced.

Newman was born in London in 1801. He attended Oxford University. As an Anglican priest he led the 'Oxford Movement', which emphasised Catholic elements in the Church of England.

In 1845 Newman was received into the Roman Catholic Church. As a Catholic priest he was a founder of Oratories in London and Birmingham. He wrote poetry and theology, and is particularly known for his *Apologia Vita Sua*, an account

of his conversion. In 1879 he was made a cardinal, and died in 1890.

During his visit to Britain in September 2010, Pope Benedict XVI declared Newman 'Blessed'.

### In Morocco, Francis calls for dialogue with Muslims

ON a two-day visit to Morocco at the end of March, Pope Francis called for increased dialogue between Muslims and Christians. He said that the country's small Christian minority should show the Muslim majority that they are members of the same human family. This, he said, would counter-act extremism.

The Pope told clergy and reverend sisters that rather than seeking conversions they should engage in works of charity.

He visited the Temara Social Centre run by Catholic sisters to serve a poor Muslim community. The centre offers nursery education, 150 children's meals a day, and tailoring lessons for women. The centre does not teach the Catholic catechism.

The population of Morocco is around 32 million, almost all Muslim (mostly Sunni).

The main languages are Arabic, French and Berber. The capital is Rabat, and the largest city is Casablanca (which can be reached by direct flight from Yundum).

In AD 42 Morocco was annexed, together with Mauritania, by the Roman Empire. In the 7th century it was conquered by Muslims. From 1912 it was a French protectorate, achieving independence in 1956.



- 1 To whom did Jesus say, 'Truly, I tell you, today you shall be with me in Paradise'?
- 2 Where in the Old Testament can we read about the 'valley of dry bones'?
- 3 What is the meaning of the term *Gentile*?
- 4 What are the colours of the Vatican flag?
- 5 Name the Vicar-General of the Diocese of Banjul.
- 6 Identify the church pictured on the right.

*Answers to 'Do you know?' page 31*





# Daily tests of our hope, faith and charity

## The Lent Letter of Bishop GABRIEL MENDY CSSp

We have, on our part, to strive and overcome the temptations of the evil one in our lives and remain faithful to our identity, vocation and Christian convictions. Otherwise we will undermine Christ's salvific mission if we allow the evil one to exercise his influence on us and distort our faith, hope and love for Christ.

### 'Sober and watchful'

St Peter reminds us in 1 Peter 5:8-9 that we should be 'sober and watchful, because our adversary the devil is always prowling about as a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. We should resist him and be firm in our faith.'

The temptations we experience in our daily lives are obviously real and serious, but they are more intense and troubling during the season of Lent.

We face greater and stronger temptations during Lent in times of prayer and spiritual retreats when we fast, abstain and reflect. The time we endeavour to undergo a conversion of heart, be strong in our faith, hope and charity, live an exemplary life and be closer to God is also the moment we are distracted and disheartened about our spiritual life and personal sacrifice. The reason is precisely that the evil one wants to frustrate our

efforts to renew our faith and service to God and become faithful and committed followers of Christ and members of his Body, the Church.

The season of Lent is rightly called the season of self-denial, discipline and spiritual warfare against the evil one and his agents. It is the time we are required to take more active and concrete steps to confront and overcome their relentless efforts to tempt and deceive us in our obedience and service to God and neighbour. We should therefore cultivate a spirit of perseverance in our fasting, prayer, abstinence and almsgiving during the season of Lent, in order to fulfil our Christian obligations and be reconciled with God and one another.

### Why God allows our faith, hope & charity to be tested

Since it was the Spirit that led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil, as stated in Matthew 4:1, one can wrongly assume that it was the Spirit that moved Jesus to be tempted in the desert. This misunderstanding also applies to the sixth petition of the Lord's Prayer. In this petition we ask God our Father not to lead us into temptation. Both statements seem to suggest that the Father and the Spirit enable us to be tempted in our weakness and sinfulness. There is obviously no basis in Scripture, history and our life experience to support this assumption and misinterpretation of Scripture.

THERE are many members of the Catholic Church who assume that the devil only tempted Jesus three times at the end of his forty days fast in the desert when he was very hungry and weak.

The reason may be that the accounts of the three evangelists in the Gospels shed more light and emphasis on the three temptations of pleasure, pride and power that the devil proposed to Jesus at the end. But these same accounts of Jesus' temptation equally affirm that he was tempted by the devil throughout the forty days and nights he fasted and prayed in the desert.

In Matthew 4:1-2, Mark 1:12-13 and Luke 4:1 it is clearly stated that 'Jesus was led by the Spirit to the wilderness, and he was tempted by the devil for forty days.' This indicates that even before the three final temptations Jesus experienced at the end, he was tempted by the devil throughout his period of fasting and prayer in the desert.

The theme of this year's Lenten Pastoral Letter 'Lent: when our faith, hope and charity are tested', is therefore intended to enlighten and guide us in our daily temptations throughout our lives, and above all during the season of Lent.

### Daily tests

The three things that last, according to St Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:13, are faith, hope and charity. They are essential for our salvation in Christ, but they are also the spiritual virtues of our lives that are tested by the evil one in times of sickness, suffering, trial, tragedy and disappointment in life. Our ambitions, desires, possessions and status, on the other hand, are temporal, and worthless for our salvation.

As followers of Christ and members of his Body, the Church, we are tempted daily to prove our faith, hope and love for Christ, the Son of God and Saviour of the world. Each one of us is called to live his or her life according to the teachings, values and demands of the Gospel of Christ and bear witness to him in our various vocations and positions in the Church and in society.

Our faith, hope and charity are, therefore, bound to be tested by the evil one and its forces in the world because we are involved in Christ's ongoing mission to save humanity from sin and death and reconcile the world to himself.

**'Each one of us is called to live his or her life according to the teachings, values and demands of the Gospel of Christ, and to bear witness to him in our various vocations and positions in the Church and in society'**



The Father and the Spirit are not responsible for our temptations. Rather, they assist and guide us when our faith, hope and charity are tested by the evil one.

*The New Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2846 states that the Greek verb for 'lead' is difficult to translate by a single English word. The Greek means both 'do not allow us to enter into temptation' and 'do not let us yield to temptation'. God cannot be tempted by the evil one, and he himself tempts no one. On the contrary, he wants to set free from evil. In this petition we ask God not to allow us to take the way that leads to temptation and sin. We are engaged in the battle 'between flesh and spirit'; this petition implores the Spirit of discernment and strength. We can safely say that God allows us to be tempted because he knows and controls all things, but he does not lead us to fall into temptation and sin.

What we need to understand and appreciate during this season of Lent and in our everyday lives is why God allows our faith, hope and charity to be tested.

There are several reasons why we are tempted and tested in our efforts to offer our lives at the service of God and humanity and be faithful as followers and ministers of Christ and his Church. First of all, we should regard our temptations as opportunities for us to testify to our faith, hope and love of God. The evil one's deceit and false promises should be an occasion for us to bear witness to our faith in Christ who revealed God's love and mercy, and delivered us from the power of sin and death.

Secondly, God allows us to be tempted so that we will experience his saving grace, and be more dependent on him in our struggles against evil in our world. This is what happened to St Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10, when God allowed a messenger of Satan to harass him. Paul testified in Romans 5:20 that when sin and transgression increase, God's grace abounds all the more. If we cooperate with God's saving grace when we are tempted we will not be misled by the evil one, because God does not allow us to be tempted beyond our weakness and strength.

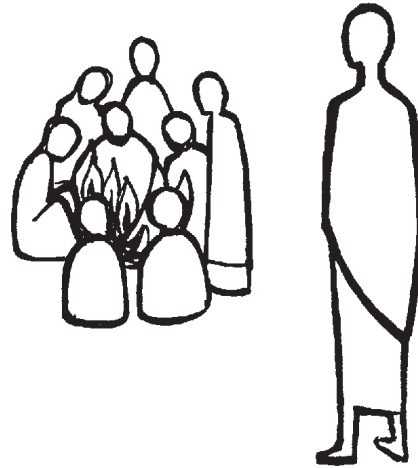
Another reason why God allows us to be tempted is that it enables us to purify our intentions and convictions and become stronger in our faith, hope and charity. When we are tempted and we prevail over evil, we are motivated to uphold and promote what we believe and practise as followers of Christ. For St Paul in 2 Corinthians 1:4-5, God helps us in all our troubles and temptations so that we can also help those who have all kinds of troubles, using the same help we ourselves have received from God.

In addition to these reasons, our temptations also enable us to realise our human weakness and imperfection, and the need to grow in our faith, hope and love of God and neighbour.

Considering all these reasons we should not be afraid of being tempted, because temptation itself is not a sin, and many virtuous people, including Jesus himself, were tempted but did not sin. They remained faithful, and were pleasing and acceptable to God.

#### **Biblical examples of tempted and tested individuals**

During this season of Lent and throughout our lives when we are tempted, we should recall and imitate the biblical figures who were also tempted and tested and still remained faithful and true to their faith, hope and love of God and neighbour. We should consider exemplary figures such as Job, Hannah,



*St Peter denied Jesus, but later declared his absolute love for him.*

Elijah, the woman with the hæmorrhage, the man born blind, St Peter and St Paul.

God tested Abraham's faith in Genesis 22:1-19, and he proved to God that he was obedient and faithful. God promised to bless him and multiply his descendants. Isaac, Jacob and Moses, who met God's favour, as stated in Judith 1:8-22, were tested to prove their love for God. In Job 1:6-22 and 2:1-10, God allowed Satan to torment Job and his family, but we are told that in all this Job did not sin or accuse God of wrongdoing.

In 1 Samuel 1:6-10, Hannah was provoked by her rival for being childless, but she poured out her soul to God in prayer, and God granted her a male child whom she named Samuel. As a result of his sufferings and trials Elijah was tempted to lose hope in God (1 Kings 19:4-8). But God came to his aid, and Elijah was able to journey for forty days and nights to Horeb, the mountain of God.

Simeon told Mary (Luke 2:33-35) that a sword of sorrow would pierce her soul, and she was distressed when her Son was lost for three days; but she 'kept all these things in her heart'.

After twelve years of unsuccessful treatment, the woman with a hæmorrhage could have lost hope, but she had faith enough to touch the fringe of Jesus' garment (Matthew 9:20-22), and she was healed.

When Jesus healed the man born blind (John 9:1-12), he was questioned and reviled by the Pharisees. They tested the man's faith, but he refuted them, and confessed his faith in Jesus as the Son of God.

St Peter denied Jesus (John 18:13-27), but later declared his absolute love for him.

In all these Biblical examples, God assisted those who were tempted, and in the end raised them beyond their weakness.

#### **Jesus' own response to the devil's temptations**

In order to overcome our own temptations during Lent, we need to consider Jesus' response to the devil's temptations. The devil was very conscious of Jesus' needs and ability, so he tempted him with what was appealing and enticing to him at that moment in time. Jesus was obviously in need, so the devil tempted him to satisfy his hunger. The natural human need for possessions and power was also exploited by the devil, who urged Jesus to prove himself the Son of God.

Jesus' response to the devil's temptations was guided and informed by what is revealed and written in God's Word – namely, Scripture. Jesus obeyed God's command and will instead of the devil's deception: 'Man should not live on bread alone'; 'You should worship the Lord your God and serve him alone'; 'You should not tempt the Lord your God'.

When we, too, are tempted by the evil one in our everyday lives, we, like Jesus, should bear in mind what is written in the Scriptures and solemnly proclaimed by the Catholic Church to be true. Our faith, hope and charity should always be inspired and motivated by God's pronouncements in the Scriptures. If we do this, we shall not be deceived by the evil one and his agents. We will remain steadfast in our Catholic faith throughout our trials in life.

#### **Thanksgiving and gratitude for God's assistance**

Without God's assistance and guidance, it is impossible to overcome the forces of sin and evil in our lives. When we prevail against temptation with the help of God's saving grace, we should equally remember to render our thanksgiving and

gratitude to God. For God is the one who enables us to endure the evil one's temptations. We should offer prayers of thanksgiving as well as gifts and offerings in gratitude to God for rescuing us from the power and influence of the evil one. The reason why God's chosen people were instructed by Moses (Deuteronomy 26:7-10) to offer him the first fruits of the harvest was God heard their voice, saw their misery and oppression at the hands of the Egyptians, and came to their rescue. The same is also expected of us when God comes to our assistance in our daily struggles against temptation and the forces of evil. I therefore pray that God will grant each and every one of us the wisdom, strength and endurance we need to overcome all the temptations and distractions we will experience during this season of Lent.

On this First Sunday of Lent, Year C, I wish all the priests, religious and faithful of the Diocese of Banjul a solemn, meaningful and spiritually enriching Lenten season.

Yours in Christ,

+ **Most Revd Dr Gabriel Mendy CSSp**

## Some weekday celebrations - April & May



#### **Saturday 29th April: St Catherine of Siena *doctor of the Church***

CATHERINE was born in Siena, Tuscany (now part of Italy). In 1363 she joined the Dominican Order, becoming known for her asceticism. Her writings include four treatises on religious mysticism. She wrote: 'Be what God meant you to be, and you will set the world on fire!' Catherine died on 29th April 1389 and was canonised in 1461.

#### **Thursday 2nd May: St Athanasius *doctor of the Church***

ATHANASIUS was born in 293 at Alexandria, Egypt. In 325 he took part in the first Council of the Church in Nicæa (now Iznik, in Turkey). The council condemned Arianism, a heresy which denied Christ's divinity. In 328 Athanasius was appointed Patriarch of Alexandria, but in 336 theological disputes led to his first banishment. He repeatedly returned from exile and resumed his office. But in 356 he was banished by the Emperor Constantine, and withdrew to Upper Egypt, where he wrote theological works. Constantine's death in 361 gave Athanasius a respite; but renewed controversy forced him to flee into the Theban desert. At the time of his death in 373, Athanasius was again in possession of his diocese.



The creed named after Athanasius was not written by him. It defines the Persons of the Trinity as revealed by the Holy Spirit, and is accepted by Catholics, Orthodox, Anglicans and most Protestants.

#### **Friday 3rd May: St Philip & St James *apostles***



PHILIP was one of the twelve apostles, fellow-countryman of Andrew and Peter, whose home was in Bethsaida, a fishing-village by the Lake of Galilee. In the early Church he was one of the 'seven men of good repute' appointed to care for widows (Acts 6:1-5). When persecution broke out after the death of Stephen, Philip went down to Samaria as a preacher and healer (Acts 8:5-13). He converted and baptised an Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-39). Later, Paul and his companions, on their way to Jerusalem, stayed with Philip at Caesarea (Acts 21:8).

JAMES is mentioned in the Gospels only in passing, but appears in Acts and the letters of Paul as an important leader of the early Church. As leader (or bishop) of the Christian community in Jerusalem, he gave judgment on whether Gentiles had to be circumcised before they could be received into the Church. (Acts 15:1-19).

*Note that this James is not to be confused with the other apostle named as James, son of Zebedee and brother of John, usually called James the Great, whose feast day is Thursday 25th July.*

#### **Monday 13th May: Our Lady of Fatima**

FROM May to October in 1917 the Virgin Mary appeared six times to three young children in the parish of Fatima, central Portugal. On 13th October a crowd of 70,000 witnessed an amazing solar phenomenon. The first national pilgrimage to the site was held in 1927, and the following year the construction of a basilica was begun. It is now flanked by retreat houses and hospitals, facing a square where many miraculous cures have been claimed. Pope Paul VI, Pope St John Paul II, Pope Benedict XIII and Pope Francis have all visited the shrine, as have pilgrims from The Gambia.



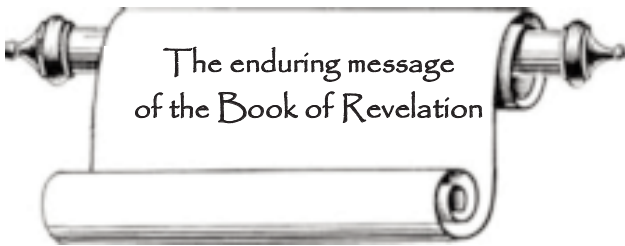
### Monday 27th May: St Augustine of Canterbury

AUGUSTINE was the first Archbishop of Canterbury, in England. He was born in 6th-century Rome, and became a Benedictine friar. Pope Gregory I sent Augustine and forty missionaries to England. They arrived in 597. Augustine converted King Ethelbert of Kent and many of his subjects. On the Pope's instructions he purified many pagan temples and consecrated 13 other bishops. He died in 604.

*We pray today for the Governors, Principal, staff and pupils of St Augustine's Senior Secondary School.*

### Friday 31st May: Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

TODAY'S feast marks the end of the end of the Month of Mary (see page 27). We celebrate the visit of Mary to her cousin Elizabeth, as related in Luke 1:39-56. In Elizabeth's house, Mary exclaimed in joy the hymn we know as the *Magnificat* ('My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord') which the Church throughout the world proclaims every day at Vespers - Evening Prayer.



THIS year ('Year C' in the Missal) the second reading at Sunday Mass during Easter Time comes from the Book of Revelation, also known as the Apocalypse.

Revelation - the last book of the Bible - is among the most difficult for modern readers to understand, because of its unfamiliar and extravagant symbolism.

Such symbolic language is characteristic of apocalyptic literature, which was widely popular in both Jewish and Christian circles from around 200 BC to AD 200.

Revelation contains visions in symbolic language taken from the Old Testament, especially the books of Ezekiel, Zechariah and Daniel. Whether these visions were real experiences of the author or simply literary conventions is an open question.

Symbolic descriptions in Revelation are not to be taken as literal. For example, it is difficult - and repulsive - to imagine a lamb with seven horns and seven eyes; yet Jesus Christ is described in precisely such words. The author used the image to suggest Christ's universal power and knowledge (universal signified by *seven*; power by *horns*; and knowledge by *eyes*).

Apocalyptic writing uses symbolic colours, metals and garments. Numbers are highly symbolic:

- \* **four** signifies the world,
- \* **six** signifies imperfection,
- \* **seven** signifies totality or perfection,
- \* **twelve** signifies Israel's tribes or the apostles,
- \* **one thousand** signifies immensity.

Revelation contains much vindictive language. This, too, is to be understood symbolically, and not literally. The harsh cries for vengeance on the lips of Christian martyrs are devices the author used to evoke in the reader a feeling of horror for apostasy that will be severely punished by God.

The horrific punishment of Jezebel and the destruction of the harlot, Babylon, are likewise literary devices. On the other hand, the woman clothed with the sun is meant to convey trust in God's providential care over the Church.

### Ruthless persecution

Revelation cannot be understood except against its historical background. Like Daniel and other apocalypses, it was composed to meet a crisis: the ruthless persecution of the early Church by the Roman authorities. The harlot Babylon symbolises pagan Rome, the city on seven hills.

Revelation is an exhortation to Christians of the first century to stand firm in the faith and avoid compromise with paganism, despite adversity and martyrdom. Christians are to await patiently the fulfilment of God's promises. The triumph of God remains a mystery to be accepted in faith and hope. It is a triumph unfolded in the life of Jesus of Nazareth, and continues to unfold in the life of the individual Christian who follows the way of the cross - even, if necessary, to a martyr's death.

The perspective is the ultimate victory when Christ the Victor will come in glory. But the book presents the decisive struggle of Christ and his followers against Satan and his cohorts as already over. Christ's overwhelming defeat of the kingdom of Satan ushers in the everlasting reign of God.

### Hope, consolation and challenge

Revelation had its origin in a time of crisis, but it remains valid for Christians of all time. In the face of apparently insuperable evil, all Christians are called to trust in Jesus' promise, 'Behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.' Those who remain steadfast in their faith in the Lord need have no fear. Suffering, persecution, even death by martyrdom, do not comprise a dead end. Christians will in the end triumph over Satan because of their fidelity to Christ. This is the enduring message of the Book of Revelation - a message of hope, consolation and challenge for all who believe.

### Who wrote Revelation?

The author of Revelation calls himself John, who has been exiled to the island of Patmos, a Roman penal colony. Although he never claims to be John the apostle, whose name is attached to the fourth Gospel, he was so identified by several of the early Church Fathers. But this identification was denied by other Fathers. The vocabulary, grammar and style make it doubtful that the book could have been put into its present form by the same person(s) responsible for the fourth Gospel.

The tone of the letters to the seven churches indicates the authority the author enjoyed over the Christian communities in Asia, possibly a disciple of John the apostle.

# Daily Mass Readings

## April & May

Memories in brackets are optional

**Sunday readings Year C. Weekday readings Year Every weekday in Lent is a day of abstinence.**

Mon 1st April	Isaiah 65:17-21. Psalm 29: 2,4-6,11-13. John 4:43-54	
Tue 2nd	Ezekiel 47:1-9,12. Psalm 45:2-3,5-6,8-9. John 5:1-16	(St Francis of Paola)
Wed 3rd	Isaiah 49:8-15. Psalm 144:8-9,13-14,17-18. John 5:17-30	
Thu 4th	Exodus 32:7-14. Psalm 105:19-23. John 5:31-47	(St Isadore)
Fri 5th	Wisdom 2:1,12-22. Psalm 33:17-21,23. John 7:1-2,10,25-30	(St Vincent Ferrer)
Sat 6th	Jeremiah 11:18-20. Psalm 7:2-3,9-12. John 7:40-53	
<b>Sun 7th</b>	Isaiah 43:16-21. Psalm 125:1-6. Philippians 3:8-14. John 8:1-11.	<b>5th SUNDAY of LENT</b>
Mon 8th	Daniel 13:1-9,15-17,19-30,33-62. Psalm 22:1-6. John 8:1-11	
Tue 9th	Numbers 21:4-9. Psalm 101:2-3,16-21. John 8:21-30	
Wed 10th	Daniel 3:14-20,91-92,95. Psalm Daniel 3:52-56. John 8:31-42.	
Thu 11th	Genesis 17:3-9. Psalm 104:4-9. John 8:51-59	(St Stanislas)
Fri 12th	Jeremiah 20:10-13. Psalm 17:2-7. John 10:31-42	
Sat 13th	Ezekiel 37:21-28. Psalm Jeremiah 31:10-13. John 11:45-56	(St Martin I)
<b>Sunday 14th - Sunday 21st April: PALM SUNDAY, HOLY WEEK &amp; EASTER TRIDUUM: full details, pages 13 - 16</b>		
<b>Mon 22nd</b>	Acts 2:14,22-33. Psalm 15:1-2,5,7-11. Matthew 28:8-15	<b>EASTER MONDAY</b>
<b>Tue 23rd</b>	Acts 2:36-41. Psalm 32:4-5,18-20,22. John 20:11-18	<b>EASTER TUESDAY</b>
<b>Wed 24th</b>	Acts 3:1-10. Psalm 104:1-4,6-9. Luke 24:13-25.	<b>EASTER WEDNESDAY</b>
<b>Thu 25th</b>	Acts 3:11-26. Psalm 8:2,5-9. Luke 24:35-48	<b>EASTER THURSDAY</b>
<b>Fri 26th</b>	Acts 4:1-12. Psalm 117:1-2,4,22-27. John 21:1-14	<b>EASTER FRIDAY</b>
<b>Sat 27th</b>	Acts 4:13-21. Psalm 117:1,14-21. Mark 16:9-15	<b>EASTER SATURDAY</b>
<b>Sun 28th</b>	Acts 5:12-16. Psalm 117:2-4,22-27. Revelation 1:9-13,17-19. John 20:19-31	<b>2nd SUNDAY of EASTER</b>
Mon 29th	Acts 4:23-31. Psalm 2: 1-9. John 3:1-8	St Catherine of Siena
Tue 30th	Acts 4:32-37. Psalm 92:1,2,5. John 3:7-15	(St Pius V)
Wed 1st May	Acts 5:17-26. Psalm 33:2-9. John 3:16-21 (or for Joseph: Genesis 1:26 – 2:3 or Colossians 3:14-15,17, 23-24. Matthew 13:543-58)	(St Joseph the Worker)
Thu 2nd	Acts 5:27-33. Psalm 33:2,9,17-20. John 3:31-38	St Athanasius
Fri 3rd	1 Corinthians 15:1-8. Psalm 18:2-5. John 14:6-14	St PHILIP & St JAMES <i>abstinence</i>
Sat 4th	Acts 6:1-7. Psalm 32:1-2,4-5,18-19. John 6:16-21	
<b>Sun 5th</b>	Acts 5:27-32,40-41. Psalm 29:2,4-6,11-13. Revelation 5:11-14. John 21:1-19.	<b>3rd SUNDAY of EASTER</b>
Mon 6th	Acts 6:8-15. Psalm 118:21-24,26-27,29-30. John 6:22-29	
Tue 7th	Acts 7:51 – 8:1. Psalm 30:3-4,6-8,17,21. John 6:30-35	
Wed 8th	Acts 8:1-8. Psalm 65:1-7. John 6:35-40	
Thu 9th	Acts 8:26-40. Psalm 65:8-9,16-17,20. John 6:44-51	
Fri 10th	Acts 9:1-20. Psalm 116:1,2. John 8:52-59	<i>abstinence</i>
Sat 11th	Acts 9:31-42. Psalm 115:12-17. John 6:60-69	
<b>Sun 12th</b>	Acts 13:14,43-52. Psalm 99:1-3,5. Revelation 7:9,14-17. John 10:27-30.	<b>4th SUNDAY of EASTER</b>
Mon 13th	Acts 11:1-18. Psalm 41:2-3; 42:3-4. John 10:1-10. (or for Fatima: Isaiah 61:9-11. Psalm 44:11-12,14-17. Luke 11:27-28)	(Our Lady of Fatima)
Tue 14th	Acts 1:15-17,20-26. Psalm 112:1-8. John 15:9-17	St MATTHIAS
Wed 15th	Acts 12:24 – 13:5. Psalm 66:2,3,5,6,8. John 12:44-50.	
Thu 16th	Acts 13:13-25. Psalm 88:2-3,21-22,25,27. John 13:16-20	
Fri 17th	Acts 13:26-33. Psalm 2:6-11. John 14:1-6	<i>abstinence</i>
Sat 18th	Acts 13:44-52. Psalm 97:1-4. John 14:7-14	(St John I)
<b>Sun 19th</b>	Acts 14:21-27. Psalm 144:8-13. Revelation 21:1-5. John 13:31-35.	<b>5th SUNDAY of EASTER</b>
Mon 20th	Acts 14:5-18. Psalm 113:1-4,15-16. John 14:21-26	(St Bernadine of Siena)
Tue 21st	Acts 14:5-18. Psalm 144:10-13,21. John 14:27-31	(St Christopher Magallanes)
Wed 22nd	Acts 15:1-6. Psalm 121:1-5. John 15:1-8	(St Rita of Cascia)
Thu 23rd	Acts 15:7-21. Psalm 95:1-3,10. John 15:9-11	
Fri 24th	Acts 15:22-31. Psalm 56:8-12. John 15:12-17	<i>abstinence</i>
Sat 25th	Acts 16:1-10. Psalm 99,2,3,9. John 15:18-21	(St Bede or St Gregory VII or St Mary Magdalene of Pazzi)
<b>Sun 26th</b>	Acts 15:1-2,22-29. Psalm 66:2-3,5-6,8. Revelation 21:10-14,22-23. John 14:23-29	<b>6th SUNDAY of EASTER</b>
Mon 27th	Acts 16:11-15. Psalm 149:1-6,9. John 15:26 – 16:4	(St Augustine of Canterbury)
Tue 28th	Acts 16:11-15. Psalm 149:1-6,9. John 16:5-11	
Wed 29th	Acts 17:15,22 – 18:1. Psalm 148:1-2,11-14. John 16:12-15	
<b>Thu 30th</b>	Acts 1:1-11. Psalm 46:2-3,6-9. Hebrews 9:24-28; 10:19-23. Luke 24:46-53	<b>The ASCENSION of THE LORD</b>
Fri 31st	Zephaniah 3:14-18 or Romans 12:9-16. Psalm Isaiah 12:2-6. Luke 1:39-5	VISITATION of the BVM <i>abstinence</i>

# Gambian Christian Anniversaries

## April & May

**170 YEARS AGO:** On 18th April 1849 Bishop Aloysius Kobès visited Banjul from Dakar. He had been made bishop only the year before, at the young age of 28. Bishop Kobès was concerned about the diminishing Catholic population in Banjul, and wanted to act quickly.

Fifteen months earlier, two priests - Fr Ronarc'h and Fr Warlop - had inaugurated a Catholic mission in Banjul. Fr Ronarc'h had already begun negotiations for a property in Hagan Street (where the cathedral now stands) with a Mr Abraham Goddard. Bishop Kobès completed the deal, paying D2,500 French francs. Apart from a few huts, the area was not much inhabited. Work began quickly in building a chapel and house, and the bishop blessed the chapel's foundation stone on 2nd May. Within two months the buildings were completed at a cost of D11,500 French francs.

**23rd April 1816:** Captain Alexander Grant purchased Banjul Island from the King of the Kombos, and renamed it 'St Mary's Island'. The former Grant Street in Banjul was named after him.

**18th April 1848:** The first High Mass was celebrated in a converted room in Banjul.

**14th April 1850:** Four Sisters of the Immaculate Conception arrived from France to open a school for girls.

**11th April 1878:** Fr Renoux arrived to take over from Fr Reihl; but he died less than five months later, on 5th October.

**1st April 1883:** The Immaculate Conception Sisters left Banjul, to be succeeded the following week by five Sisters of St Joseph of Cluny - one French, the others Irish.

**1st May 1931:** Bishop Augustin Grimault confirmed 30 young people.

**4th May 1935:** Arrival of Sr Albert Byrne SJC who was to serve in The Gambia almost continuously until her death in Banjul on 16th July 2001, aged 90.

**15th April 1936:** Fr Harold Whiteside celebrated the first Mass at Old Jeshwang.

**9th April 1948:** Bishop Prosper Dodds blessed the first St Therese's Church at Kanifing, now used as the parochial hall.

**13th April 1951:** In Freetown, the Archbishop of Canterbury consecrated Rodney Norman Coote as Second Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Gambia & Rio Pongas.

**15th April 1951:** Fr Michael Moloney (later Bishop Moloney) was appointed the mission's first Prefect-Apostolic.

**8th April 1958:** Completion of the mission house at Bwiam.

**4th May 1958:** Episcopal Ordination in Dublin of Fr Michael Moloney as first Bishop of Banjul.

**3rd April 1959 (60 years ago):** Opening of Njongon Primary School

**24th April 1960:** Bishop Moloney blessed Star of the Sea Church Bakau.

**27th April 1960:** Fr Michael Frawley returned to Nigeria, having spent seven years in charge of St Augustine's High School. His successor was Fr Michael Cleary (now Bishop Emeritus).

**2nd April 1962:** Bishop Moloney blessed a bell at the Cathedral.

**9th April 1972:** Archbishop Francis Carroll of Monrovia blessed the new St Therese's Church Kanifing.

**16th April 1979 (40 years ago):** Departure of Fr McNally.

**4th April 1980:** Bishop Moloney (*right*) announced his resignation owing to ill health.

**5th April 1983:** The Cluny Sisters celebrated 100 years in The Gambia at the opening of the convent at Darsilami, with Sisters Elizabeth, Joseph and Philomena in residence.

**13th April 1985:** at Bakau Stadium, Bishop Cleary ordained Anthony Gabisi and Peter Gomez as priests and David Jimoh Jarju and Edward Gomez as deacons.

**12th April 1986:** Ordination of Fr Edward Gomez.

**26th April 1986:** Ordination of Fr David Jimoh Jarju.

**21st April 1989 (30 years ago):** The renovated church at Bwiam was rededicated to Our Lady of Fatima.

**25th April 1992:** Opening of All Saints Brikama.

**17th April 1993:** Opening of St James Kandunkou.

**23rd April 1995:** Opening of Holy Rosary Lamin.

**5th April 1997:** Opening of St Matthew Barra.

**10th April 1999 (20 years ago):** Ordination by Bishop Cleary of Fr Joseph Karbo and Fr Michael Ndecky.

**21st April 2001:** Opening of St Peter & St Paul Albreda.

**18th May 2004 (15 years ago):** Death aged 85 in Aix-en-Provence, France, of Cardinal Hyacinthe Thiandoum (*right*) Archbishop of Dakar 1962-2000.

**6th April 2006:** Death in Sweden of Margareta Edenius, long-standing benefactor of Catholic education in The Gambia.

**14th May 2006, St Matthias' Day:** Episcopal Ordination of the Rt Revd Robert Ellison CSSp.

**1st April 2007, Palm Sunday:** Bishop Ellison blessed the Chapel of Perpetual Adoration at St Therese's Kanifing.

**28th April 2007:** Bishop Emeritus Michael Cleary opened the Anne-Marie Javouhey Academy at Brusibi.

**29th April 2007:** Opening of St Teresa of Calcutta, Mariamakunda.

**12th May 2007:** The Cluny Sisters celebrated the 200th anniversary of the foundation of their order.

**11th-23rd April 2008:** in Nairobi, Bishop Ellison attended the Pastoral Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue.

**25th May 2008:** Death in Dakar of Monsignor Pierre Sagna CSSp, Bishop Emeritus of St Louis du Sénégal, who spent his retirement in The Gambia at Holy Cross Church, Brusibi.

**During May 2008:** In Freetown, Bishop Ellison took part in the Bishops' Conference of The Gambia & Sierra Leone.

**20th April 2009 (10 years ago):** Launching of the Network of Catholic Women's Associations.

**2nd May 2009 (10 years ago):** President Jammeh invested Bishop Ellison with the insignia of Honorary Commander of the Order of the Republic of The Gambia (CRG).



**11th May 2009 (10 years ago):** Brother Marcelin, Principal of the Lycée Sacré Coeur, Ziguinchor, visited St Peter's Senior Secondary School, Lamin, with 11 teachers and 84 pupils.

**24th May 2009 (10 years ago):** 187 years after the arrival of the first Methodist missionaries, the Methodist Mission in The Gambia achieved autonomy from the parent mission in Britain.

**During April 2010:** *Ad limina* visit to Rome of Bishop Ellison and his brother bishops of Sierra Leone and Liberia.

**2nd May 2014:** Death of Louise Njie, second Gambian woman MP and successively Minister of Education and Minister of Health. See Fee moi Gambia, page 6.

**10th May 2015:** Sr Marie J. Mendy, the only Gambian sister of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, made her perpetual profession.

**End of May 2014:** After serving in The Gambia since 1967, Fr Michael Casey CSSp finally retired to Ireland.

**25th March 2017:** The Gambia Christian Council held a thanksgiving service at Bakau Stadium attended by thousands of Christians of all denominations.

**17th-19th April 2017:** The Diocesan Finance Committee held its first Annual General Meeting. 'Key stakeholders' discussed how the Bishop's Office could 'better partner' with them.

**17th-20th May 2017:** a prayer walk was held from Koina to Banjul for the salvation of souls across The Gambia.



## The Council which revitalised the Church

SIXTY years ago, on the feast of the Conversion of St Paul, 25th January 1959, at the Church of St Paul-without-the-Walls in Rome, Pope John XXIII made a dramatic and unexpected announcement.

The Pope convened the Second Vatican Council – the council which some say brought about the most momentous changes in the Catholic Church since the 16th-century Reformation.

### A caretaker Pope?

In October 1958 Pope Pius XII had died, having presided over the Catholic Church since 1939. The cardinals chose as his successor the elderly Patriarch of Venice, Angelo Roncalli.



The new Pope, who took the name John XXIII, was known for his holiness and pastoral warmth. For years he had won the affection and trust of almost everyone with whom he came in contact, Catholic and non-Catholic, Christian and non-Christian.

It was generally believed that the cardinals had chosen an elderly man (John XXIII was already 77) because he would quietly 'keep the seat warm' for a few years, giving the Church the opportunity to take stock before choosing a younger and more vigorous man. No one expected surprises from him.

But the cardinals and the whole Church were in for a big surprise. Less than three months after his election the new Pope set in train preparations for the Second Vatican Council - which was to transform the Church's perception of itself and its role in the world.

The Council sat from 1962 to 1965. It was a source of pastoral renewal and reconciliation with other Christians and the wider world. Orthodox and Protestant observers attended sessions, and one of the outcomes of the Council was a new openness on the part of the Catholic Church towards other Christian churches.

The Council emphasised the role of lay people by seeing the Church as 'the People of God', and direct congregational participation in worship increased with

liturgical reforms that included the offering of Mass in local languages as well as in Latin.

### Pope John's legacy

John XXIII died during the Council, on 3rd June 1963. During his five-year reign (the shortest for two centuries) he had initiated the revitalising of the Church.



He was succeeded by Pope Paul VI, whose task it became to steer the Council to its conclusion and to implement its sometimes controversial reforms.

The Council closed in December 1965.

### Reforms in Banjul

Bishop Michael Moloney was among the 2,800 bishops who took part in Vatican II. He returned to Banjul on 13th January 1966.

Two months later, the high altar in the Cathedral in Banjul was moved forward so that Mass could be celebrated facing the people. The following month, Bishop Moloney set up three commissions: the liturgy, headed by Fr Hugh Fagan; ecumenism, Fr Michael Flynn; and the laity, Fr Seán Little.

Other changes in the diocese stemming from Vatican II included the setting-up of parish councils, and increased participation in the Mass by the laity – a process which continues in our diocese to this day.



*The opening of Vatican II at St Peter's Rome*



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

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

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



CRS, in partnership with the National Malaria Control Programme (NMCP) of the Ministry of Health, have been implementing SMC strategy targeting children (3 to 59 months) in Upper and Central River regions from 2014 to 2016, supported by UNITAID ACCESS-SMC project. In 2017, with the support of the Global Fund, this high-impact intervention is being implemented again in the two regions to prevent children from getting malaria. The two regions have been identified due to their relatively high malaria transmission.

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

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

### **Answers to 'Do you know?' page 23**

- 1 The repentant criminal – one of the two who were crucified with Jesus. Luke 23:29-43
- 2 Ezekiel 37:1-14
- 3 Gentile derives from Latin, meaning 'people' or 'clan'. In the New Testament, it refers to anyone who is not a Jew. It is sometimes used to refer to pagans.
- 4 White and yellow
- 5 Fr Anthony Sonko, Parish Priest of St Anthony, Kololi
- 6 The Basilica of Our Lady of Deliverance at Poponguine, Senegal.



## Jesus washes his disciples' feet

**D**uring supper, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel about himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him.

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, are you going to wash my feet?' Jesus answered, 'You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand.'

*John 13:3-7*

*Extract from the Gospel for Holy Thursday, 18th April*