

St John the Evangelist

Fr James Callaghan OSB

3rd Sunday of Easter

26 April 2020 (Year A)

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Mass Times this Week

Saturday 25	St Mark, Evangelist, Feast
5:45pm	Vigil Mass: <i>Bishop Camillo Ballin RIP</i>
Sunday 26	3rd Sunday of Easter
10:00am	Mass: <i>Anthony O'Donnell</i>
Monday 27	Feria
Tuesday 28	Feria
Wednesday 29	St Catherine of Siena, Virgin, Doctor, patron of Europe, Feast
9:30am	Mass: <i>Health of Community, Schools and Parishes</i>
Thursday 30	Feria
6:30pm	Mass:
Friday 1	Feria
9:30am	Mass: <i>Howard Snowdon Month's Mind</i>
Saturday 2	St Athanasius, Bishop & Doctor, Mem
5:45pm	Vigil Mass: <i>Parish</i>
Sunday 3	4th Sunday of Easter
10:00am	Mass:

Prayer to St Michael

Holy Michael, Archangel, defend us in the day of battle. Be our safeguard against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do Thou, Prince of the Heavenly Host, by the power of God, thrust down into hell Satan and all the wicked spirits who wander through the world for the ruin of souls. Amen.

LAUDETUR JESUS CHRISTUS!

These are bewildering times! Our lives as we have lived them up until only weeks ago seem to have been if not turned upside down, at least put on hold. The future seems uncertain - to put it mildly - and we are not sure of so many things we have held onto in the past, or whether we were even right to hold on to them at all.

At this present time it is perhaps easier than it was before to identify with the two disciples trudging their way from Jerusalem back to Emmaus that evening. As in all probability we would have been doing (if we didn't have to observe "social distancing"), they were having a rather aimless conversation about what had just happened, about how senseless it all seemed to be, how their hopes had been raised up so high and how now everything just seemed, quite frankly, a mess. Even the reports they had heard that Jesus of Nazareth was alive could really be dismissed out of hand - they saw him dead, and the dead have a habit of staying that way.....

This stranger who then joined them on the road did not seem to share their despondency; in fact his first reaction to their words was to tell them off! "You foolish men! So slow to believe the full

message of the prophets!" And he went on to speak to them in a way that seized their attention: so much so that they were anxious to continue the conversation once they reached Emmaus ("Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us?").

I think this raises a vital question for us - even more so at this deeply strange time. The two men found themselves in the presence of Jesus but did not realise it; could it just possibly be that we are in the same situation now? Could it just be that we allow our pre-occupation with news broadcasts etc to dim our awareness that God is with us right in the heart of this crisis?

It may be that for very many years we have been out of the habit of seeing how involved God is with the human race (that is, with us!) and with our affairs. If that is the case, look at St Peter in the first reading. How could it have been that the man who betrayed Jesus three times in his moment of greatest need was now standing there seven weeks later and preaching with the utmost force and conviction that this same Jesus "is the one who was not abandoned to Hades and whose body did not experience corruption. God raised this man Jesus to life...."?

Peter himself gives us the answer. Firstly, his discourse draws heavily from Scripture; without it, in fact, he could not have preached with such power, nor would his words have resonated so deeply among his hearers. Let us not deprive ourselves of this most essential means of encountering the Risen Christ. If we are out of the habit of reading the Bible - OK, let's start again, and learn in each line how closely united each one of us is with our Father. I would suggest that during Eastertide we could find no better place to start than with the Gospel of St John.....

(cont.)

And that leads us to the second part of the answer. We may feel that scripture is somehow difficult or too demanding; if we do, we can take heart that *that is not our fault* - we need some special help in understanding what we read (yes, we really are all "foolish men"!). St Peter stood there and bore witness to the Risen Christ only moments after he had received the Holy Spirit on that first Pentecost; it was that Holy Spirit who gave Peter the understanding he needed, and it is the same Holy Spirit who is ours for the asking!

So before we settle down to read Scripture for however many minutes, let us remember to pray to the Holy Spirit for the help to put ourselves in as receptive a frame of mind as we can and to begin to draw real sustenance from what we are about to read.

Above all, let us persevere with this and make prayerful reading (what is fashionably called "Lectio" at the moment) a daily habit, not least in these days when we cannot directly receive the Holy Eucharist itself. I can't think of any better prayer than the traditional one:

COME, HOLY SPIRIT, FILL THE HEARTS OF THY FAITHFUL
AND KINDLE IN THEM THE FIRE OF THY LOVE.
SEND FORTH THY SPIRIT, LORD, AND THEY SHALL BE CREATED
AND THOU SHALT RENEW THE FACE OF THE EARTH.

LET US PRAY:

O GOD, WHO DOST TEACH THE HEARTS OF THE FAITHFUL BY THE LIGHT OF THE
HOLY SPIRIT, GRANT THAT BY THE GIFT OF THAT SAME SPIRIT WE MAY BE
ALWAYS TRULY WISE
AND EVER REJOICE IN HIS CONSOLATION.
THROUGH CHRIST OUR LORD. AMEN.

If we do this, then we shall come to realise that our hearts, too, are burning within us, just as the disciples' hearts did on that road to Emmaus; and we may also find that in the trudging journey we felt we were making at this uneasy time, we will find there is a definite spring in our step!

God bless you all,

Fr James.

Thought for the Week

Anxiety is the greatest evil that can befall a soul except sin. God commands you to pray, but He forbids you to worry.

St. Francis de Sales

Information and Useful Links

Please see our website for a list of on-line resources, including churches who are live-streaming Mass, and Magnificat's offer for free on-line access during this troubled time. You can also go on www.ChurchPaper.co.uk for editions of all the catholic newspapers.

Please give Kathryn your email address if you would like to receive the bulletin in soft copy.

SVP ANNOUNCEMENT

SVP headquarters have a special fund for people in desperate need. If you aware of anyone who could benefit from this please contact Fr James who will deal with the information in the strictest confidence.

A reminder that our local SVP branch is much in need of new members; if you are interested in joining them in their extremely worthwhile work, again please let Fr James know.

Middlesbrough Food Bank: no current donations

Please remember that financial donations would be an alternative if it was easier for you at the moment. There are some flyers at the back of church and donations can, of course, be made on-line. Cash donations, however small, could be handed in to St Benedict's House.

Note that if you have items you would like to donate, we can arrange for them to go to the Easingwold Food Bank in lieu.

Offertory Collections and Charities:

- Thank you for those of you who have offered different ways in which they can still make an offering to the Parish. Envelopes can be dropped through the letterbox of the priory, and if you wish to pay by standing order, Kathryn can set that up. We are most grateful for whatever you can do. This week, Kathryn counted £220 from envelopes dropped through the door. If you would like to drop in a cheque, our Account name is "**Ampleforth Abbey Trust: St John's Parish**". Simply "Ampleforth Abbey Trust" will do – there is no need to worry that the money will not come into the parish account, it will! Fr James does not have a personal bank account, so the bank will not accept cheques made out to him.
- Easyfundraising this quarter has raised £42.44 for the Parish – thank you very much to those who have signed up. Please see Kathryn if you would like to donate as you shop, at no cost to yourself.

Eggs: Free until further notice

Please take what you need from the Porch, many thanks to Trish and Jane. You are still welcome to donate to the Poor Box if you wish, but there is no obligation.

Upcoming Events

We would ask that you still keep Saturday 4 July free for a Summer Fayre, hoping that we will be able to hold such an event by that time. If we can, it will indeed be a Parish Celebration!.

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

the Sick, Infirm and Housebound: Sally Agar, Mattie Burke, Mary Capaldi, Kitty Carrington, Cath Cavanagh, Jenny Cook, David Craig, Paul Gallagher, Pat Grotrian, Catherine Harmer, Graham Harrand, Mary-Rose Harrison, Marta Hatfield, Vince Kelly, Darren Kennedy, Lt. Commander Matthew Kiernan, Kay Moss, Marion Myers, Marie Podgorski, Harrison Torr and Sophie Williams; *those who have Died recently:* Michelle Hebb, Noreen Fodden, James O'Brien, Gillian Mayne and *those whose Anniversaries occur about this time:* Brigid Joyce, Tadeusz Newland, Wifrid Gundry, Ronald Taylor, Denis Sullivan