

Newsletter for the parish of St. Anne & St. Bernard.



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Fifteenth Sunday of the Year

16.07.17

Revolution in kindness. Thought for this week, taken from Jean Vanier, spelling out the meaning of the words of Jesus

Blessed are you because you are gentle; you refuse violence and aggressiveness; you allow yourself to be led by the Spirit into the world of tenderness and patience

Remember the documentary about Jean Vanier and L'Arche, on at FACT on July 27th. at 6.30 p.m.

Do please pass in or email your own suggestions, in just one sentence, to help us live out this revolution in kindness

Today's Scripture readings at Mass use the images of seed, of fertility, of growth and

yield to throw light on how God is at work. God always gives growth but not every one wishes to grow.



The parable illustrates the frustration of Jesus that so few are responding to his call. Yet he knew he was doing what God wanted and wished to assure his friends that ultimately God would triumph. To understand the Gospel writers we must realise that key to their teaching was the truth that only through failure, through

Imagine a sower going out experiencing the cross , would victory come.

to sow. Some fell on the

path...but there was no

depth to the soil

others fell on rich soil

and produced their crop

Many of us experience great frustration as Jesus did. We

might even be feeling failures ourselves, attributing the

lowering of interest in the Church and religious matters to

ourselves. This Gospel is even more relevant today. All we can do

is be ever more responsive to God's Word, to have an open and humble spirit. It is also

vital that we believe what the Prophet Isaiah says – that “*the rain and snow come down from the heavens and do not return without watering the earth...giving growth to provide*

seed...so the word which comes from my mouth does not return to me empty, without carrying out my will...”

The second reading these Sundays comes from Romans, Chapter 8, so rich in teaching. The whole of creation “*has been groaning in one great act of giving birth*” and then Paul says, how much more “*are we who possess the first fruits of the Spirit, we too groan inwardly as we wait for our bodies to be set free*”. It was St. Augustine who said “*My heart is made for you, O God, and only in you will it find rest*”.

There will be **Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament** on Saturday 4.15-5.15 p.m. and on Sunday 9.15-10.15 a.m.

Confessions are heard during the times of Exposition – and any other time you need

Mass this week is as follows -

Saturday	5.30 p.m.	Susan O'Hare
Sunday	10.30 a.m.	Francis Roberts
Tuesday	<u>10.00</u>	St. Anne's School leavers
Wednesday	12.00	Requiem Mass for Bridget Mulrooney
Thursday	12.00	Freddie and Lizzie Burke
Friday	12.00	Cathy Jones
Saturday	5.30 p.m.	Wally Quinn

Funerals this week.

On Wednesday at 12.00 noon there will be a Requiem Mass for Bridget Mulrooney

On Thursday at 3.00 p.m. a funeral service for David Carr.

May they rest in Peace. Please pray for their families.

The next **Co-Ordination meeting** will be on 23rd. September

Next **Men's meeting** 17th.July. St. Bernard's. 7.30 p.m. All men welcome

Prayer Group every Friday at 7.30 p.m. in the Sion Room

The **Fair Trade stall** is open every Sunday after 10.30 a.m. Mass

Tea, coffee and biscuits served after Mass every Sunday.

This week sees the retirement of **Sr. Brigid FCJ** as head teacher of Bellerive, the feeder high school for girls in our parish. Sr. Brigid has done such an amazing job for Bellerive, having spent so many years there, first of all as a science teacher and then as head teacher, that she has become a legend in her own life time. She went way beyond the ordinary retirement age for teachers – I daren't say by how many years, in fact, I don't know - but her dedication to the girls of the school and the wellbeing of all school members has provided us all with a wonderful example of leadership. Thank you, Sister. May God bless and reward you.

There will be a **Mass of Thanksgiving for Sr. Brigid** in the Cathedral on Thursday, 20th. July at 2.00 p.m. Everyone is invited.

Another FCJ Sister leaving us is **Sr. Mary** who is retiring to Ireland. Sr. Mary lived and worshipped in St. Clare's parish, but for many years she has ministered to some of our parishioners in Greenheys Care Home, where she developed a little community for Holy Communion every week. Thank you and God bless you, Sr. Mary. I am sure it is in your DNA to continue this work wherever you retire to.

St. Anne's, our parish school, closes on Friday for the summer holiday, as do many of our secondary schools. I wish to thank all teachers, assistants, carers and all the staff for the wonderful care and attention they have shown our children. To call St. Anne's the "friendship school" was very apt, and this has characterised the relationships between the staff, the children and their parents throughout this year and every year. On the part of the parish may everyone have a most enjoyable and refreshing summer break.

Money Report. The collection last weekend was £412.70. Add on £624.80 from standing orders and tax returns to make a total of £1,037.50 **Thank you**

It is good to hear that, throughout the country, there are attempts, within parishes, to let the spirit of Pope Francis permeate at a deepening level. This week, in north Lancashire, there is a Catholic People's Week with the theme 'Bringing Francis into the parish', a shared reflection on the words and actions of Pope Francis from living the Gospel to caring for our common world. We ourselves have recently become a *livesimply* parish, but we have still to work out how best we can live simply. The accompanying sheet gives many examples of active parishes throughout the country which have much to teach us. Do please read this sheet entitled *Parish Practice. Caring for Creation.*

A few weeks ago I mentioned about Ann-Marie, a Jamaican woman, deported from here about 11/12 years ago with her little boy, who had developed cancer in her hand. Chemotherapy would cost £2,000, the alternative being amputation. No NHS in Jamaica. I am very grateful to the parishioner who provided that money. Ann-Marie has expressed her profound gratitude. I know many of you prayed that the money would come. Thank you. God is amazing.

"Jesus lives in and through the love of the Father, and it is this love of the Father that he pours into our hearts by the gift of his Spirit. It is this love that transforms us and opens us up and calls us forth as lovers. This is essentially the experience of prayer. When Jesus says, "I give you my peace, I leave you my peace," he is giving us the treasure of God, which is the kiss of God. It is the resting of the beloved in the beloved. It is this experience of union with God which touches us in our very depths and which is already the calling forth to the infinite". (Jean Vanier, from Be not Afraid)

Many of you watched the **Jimmy McGovern** drama, **Broken**. I am currently watching it on iPlayer. The issues covered are very true to life which probably helps to make it so powerful. To be strongly recommended. Most of Jimmy's plays involve priests and the Church. For the film *Priest* he attended Mass at St. Bernard's several times. He said recently on BBC Radio that he is not back in the Church yet – but the call may come. A prayer for Jimmy would be much appreciated. May he continue to challenge us.

The **50/50** has been a good and regular source of income for many years. For this we thank Eddie and Bill. While the prize has remained at £50 the income has been down slightly because people have either gone to God or moved on. So we have space for some new members. £1.00 a week – and your £50 eventually comes up. At least for most people! Please see Bill at the Saturday Mass or Eddie at the Sunday Mass.

Little Mick's Spot (paws for thought). I make many people laugh. I don't intend to and even now I don't know why. OK those pigeons do annoy me. They are sitting high on the house gutter and people think it funny that I try and get at them. TD says it is the way I dance up and down on my hind legs, barking as loudly as I can. Those pigeons just laugh at me. TD tells me that his last dog, Jack, was teased by a whole family of swallows who took it in turn to dive bomb almost on top of him. They were playing with him and it was as though they were laughing at him. He couldn't cope with it. He just got more and more annoyed. I sympathise with Jack. But where everyone really laughs at me is in my field. I can't help the way I'm built – little legs, maybe my front legs a little bent. But am I fast! That's the trouble. The grass, weeds, everything is very long, and when they throw the ball I'm after it like lightning. But it means I have to make my way through and over shrubs and grasses and I can't get there quickly enough. I think I look as graceful as a race horse. To them it looks as though I am bouncing up and down like a ball,. They do it just to have a laugh at my expense. O well. Small minds. Some people will laugh at anything! Even, even at me

This week *The Tablet* has published these two editorials on very significant issues – the Church’s attitude to contraception and the recent Taylor Report in praise of workers’ rights.

According to Melinda Gates, access to contraception is a vital key to promoting the welfare of women and children in poorer parts of the world. The co-founder of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, speaking in London on World Population Day this week, repeated her plea to the Catholic Church to reconsider its attitude to birth control. A practising Catholic herself, through her influence the Gates Foundation refuses to finance or support agencies involved in abortion.

The creation of a more just global economy is a more fundamental factor in the lifting of women and children out of poverty than access to contraception. Nevertheless Gates has put her finger boldly and relentlessly on the contraception issue, saying “too many women around the world get pregnant too young, too old and too often”. As a result of poor reproductive healthcare, too many women die in childbirth and too many children die in infancy.

This disturbing fact must be faced by a Church which wishes to make good its claim to be “of and for the poor”. The biggest factor in reducing population growth in Africa and elsewhere has been shown to be the education of young women –and the biggest educator of young women in Africa is the Catholic Church. But this is not the whole story. Educated young women make their own choices about their lives, including how they will regulate their fertility. And the choices they make will not always be ones the Church approves of. At least not officially.

There is more to the equation even than this. Progress in public health and disease eradication is making a significant difference to infant mortality

rates in many less developed regions. The Gates Foundation deserves considerable credit for this. But without some effective method of birth control –and cultural acceptance of it –these better post-natal survival rates can accelerate population growth beyond the capacity of the local economy to absorb it. This is emphatically not the Malthusian fallacy –that a population rises to the point where lack of subsistence naturally limits it –because each new arrival eventually can become a new pair of hands for the creation of wealth. African economies are growing. But new jobs are not appearing fast enough to satisfy all who need them. This applies pressure on unemployed young people to migrate, legally or illegally, for instance to Europe. Truly the world is an interconnected place. The great majority of Catholic women disregard Catholic teaching on contraception. It seems to them not just nonsensical but anti-women, representing a historical attitude that women’s bodies, and above all their reproductive faculties, belong to men. That dystopian *Handmaid’s Tale* world is not the world they live in. Yet many in the Catholic Church cannot yet see its teaching on contraception as others – including its own followers –see it.

Next year is the 50th anniversary of Pope Paul VI’s encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, which labelled contraception an intrinsic evil. Tom Burns, then editor of *The Tablet*, wrote in response “neither joy nor hope can we derive from the encyclical”. That remains our verdict today. But there must be hope, at last, that Pope Francis does not need someone like Melinda Gates to point it out. He can see it for himself

Literally, *Rerum Novarum* means “new thing”. The title of Leo XIII’s seminal 1891 encyclical could be modified to provide a sub-title to the Review of Modern Working Practices – “another new thing”. Published this week and known as the Taylor report after its chairman, Matthew Taylor, the review looks very closely at the so-called “gig economy” –where, like pop stars hired for one-night shows (“gigs”), individuals are handed out work or not according to availability and demand; and paid, or not, accordingly. It is very different from the industrial and urbanised economy addressed by Pope Leo, and it has its own forms of exploitation.

It has mushroomed over the last decade, with more than a million people now involved. The defining characteristic of the gig economy is the zero-hours contract, where the individual does not know in advance whether there is work. Matthew Taylor’s core principle is that all work, gig or not, should be secure, decent work, decently paid, with the dignity of the individual worker recognised and protected. This is well worthy of *Rerum Novarum*, or indeed of John Paul II’s almost forgotten masterpiece on the theology of work, *Laborem Exercens*. It is against these fine broad objectives that his detailed proposals will be measured. Some in the trade union movement have already claimed that he does not go far enough. Thus his report fails to insist that the almost prohibitive costs of taking a defaulting employer to law should be

reduced or even abolished, simply saying it is unlikely the Government would agree to do so. But in the uncertain political climate at present, nobody really knows what is likely and what is not. But rights that are too expensive to claim are not rights at all.

In place of zero-hours contracts, which are technically just self-employment, Taylor proposes a new status of “dependent contractor”. A worker in that category would become entitled to many of the benefits of conventional employment, such as sick and holiday pay, and the employer would have to pay National Insurance. This would reduce one of the chief attractions of the gig economy for businesses – that it was cheaper than full employment. It would produce a more equitable sharing of risk, if and when the workload declined. At present the burden falls entirely on the individual. But the Taylor report hopes to retain one of the chief attractions of the gig economy to workers –the flexibility it allows them to work or not, depending on other calls on their time.

Teresa May has welcomed the review, and she may well be criticised by her own more free-market minded backbenchers for trying to interfere in a labour market that has produced both full employment and economic growth. But alienated and unhappy workers are not going to be productive workers. And in Britain, productivity is lamentably low. That is not a new thing, but an endemic long term threat to the whole economy.