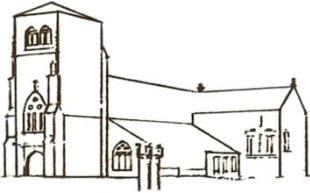


Newsletter for the parish of St. Anne & St. Bernard.



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Fifth Sunday of Lent

18.03.18

Revolution in kindness (as encouraged by Jean Vanier). Thought for this week –
One kind word can change someone's entire day.

"when I am lifted up I will make a new covenant with them...Deep within them I will plant my law, writing it on their hearts...I will be their God and they shall be my people"



"We should like to see Jesus"
"When I am lifted up from the earth, I shall draw all people to myself"
"A pure heart create for me, O God"



These are extracts from today's

Scripture readings. They focus on the cross whereby the new covenant was established, a covenant not written in stone but written by the Spirit on the human heart. But that heart must itself must be renewed. In the Gospel the Greeks (gentiles) ask to "see Jesus" – meaning, in Gospel language, to experience the risen Christ.

The answer to their request is that only after he has been crucified will they "see" him.

Only with his crucifixion will he bear fruit (the wheat grain which falls to the ground and dies) – that is the welcome the gentile Convert will receive by true faith in Jesus.

To recognise the significance and grace of the cross we must yearn for a "pure heart and a steadfast spirit". The cross of Jesus will break down the barrier between Jew and gentile, as Jesus said to the Samaritan woman. No longer would we worship in Jerusalem but in "spirit and in truth". The cross of Jesus would break down all barriers between people. The only obstacle arises from our own unconverted self.

There will be **Stations of the Cross** every Wednesday evening at 7.00 p.m. during Lent, followed by Mass at 7.30 p.m.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament which we celebrate every weekend -
on Saturday, 4.15-5.15 p.m., and on Sunday, 9.15-10.15 a.m.
There will be an opportunity for **confession** during these times.

Mass this week is as follows -

Saturday	5.30 p.m.	Parishioners
Sunday	10.30 a.m.	George Fitzimmons
Tuesday	12.00 noon	Eileen Hitkin
Wednesday	7.30 p.m.	Eddie Barrett
Thursday	9.00 a.m.	Una Mallon
Friday	12.00	Mary Higgins
Saturday	5.30 p.m.	Parishioners

Please note the time of Thursday's Mass. There will be a Requiem Mass for Deacon Fred Warriner, formerly Head Teacher at St. Bernard's, at Blessed Sacrament church, Aintree, at 12.00 noon on Thursday.

The **Prayer Group** will meet in **St. Bernard's** House this coming Friday at 7.30 p.m. Please note change of venue for this week only.

The **Men's Group** will meet on Monday, 9th. April, 7.30 p.m. in St Bernard's.

The next **Justice & Peace** group is on Thursday, 19th. April in St. Bernard's

Messy Church will re-commence in May

Please keep our sick friends in your prayer -Eddie Barrett, Pat Brown, Adam Dean, Stephen Woo, Nancy Goss, Bill Whitehead, Selamawit, Saadat, Ken Otu, John Donohoe, Flo Coffey, Sister Win, Ann McMahan, Bernie Connolly, Andy Murphy, Trish Riley and the many who have asked for our prayer this week. We pray for people in pain – many among our congregation. We would like to know of anyone at all who is housebound. We also take Holy Communion to the Marmaduke Street Care Home (Lotus Care), Arundel Park Nursing Home, Greenheys Lodge, Redford House (Brain Injury Rehabilitation Trust) on Upper Parliament Street, to the Granby Hub, and to the Liverpool Women's Hospital. If you seek prayer for your sick family and friends please let us know. We can take Holy Communion to them.

Please pray for those who have died recently –Deacon Fred Warriner, Ali (Leo's Dad)

Money Report. The collection last weekend. was £435.28. Add on £624.80 from standing orders and tax returns to make a total of **£1,060.08**. Thank you all very much.

Our thanks for the donation of £1,000 for Cafod.

The Eucharistic Congress. The main day of the Congress is the Saturday, September, 8th., when ten thousand people from all over the country will gather in the Echo Arena. We have been asked to provide **five people from our parish** to represent us. The main speaker is Bishop Barron, a Bishop in California, who has a huge online ministry and has provided many courses in the Faith. He will be well worth hearing. Please let me know if you would like to take part. There are also a number of fringe events associated with the Congress. More information to follow.

Asylum seekers are now being housed well out of Liverpool and it can have its problems. There is a delightful young man from Iran who is desperate to become a Catholic Christian, but there is no one in Ashton in Makerfield to interpret for him. Fr. Brian brought him to me, not knowing what to do. He needs the teaching but he also needs a community like ours. Do pray we can get a solution. A move to Liverpool would be best. He could come on a weekday by bus for teaching but what about Sunday?

This month's **Catholic Pic** has a three page article on St. Bernard's church and its development, to be made into eleven houses, built within the church structure. We were sent some extra copies so that everyone can be sure of getting one.

Messy Church will be starting up again on the first Saturday of May, 2.30-4.30 p.m. Anyone who would like to volunteer please see Frances Ripley

Discussion after Mass on Wednesday on the Pope's Laudato Si and Sunday's Gospel.

Care for our common home Perhaps we could pause this week for a daily prayer...

“Lord grant us the wisdom to care for our precious Earth. Help us to act now for the good of future generations and all your creatures. Help us to become instruments of a new creation, founded on the covenant of your love. Amen” (Cafod)

Holy Land parishes Easter cards: no donations required. The Justice & Peace group invite our parishioners to send an Easter card to parishes in the Holy Land, and because the funds provided by the Christmas card campaign were in surplus we can do this without asking for donations. Please just take a minute to write a message of goodwill and support in the cards at the back of the church to Catholics in the Holy Land at Easter time. We know they are very much appreciated there.

The **Romero** Lecture by Ruben Zamora on 19th March at Hope University, starting at 7pm. At the start of his career as a politician and a diplomat, Ruben Zamora worked with Oscar Romero. He will talk about the current situation in El Salvador.

I am happy to tell you that Oscar Romero will be declared a saint by Pope Francis, probably at World Youth Day in Panama next January.

Fair Trade Easter Eggs. We are selling Real Easter Eggs with the Easter message again this year. The price is still £3.99. People were very good last year when it seemed we had badly over ordered. So rather than presume on people’s good will we have ordered fewer eggs this year – though still a lot.

The Parish Rooms. The floor of the St. Anne’s room is holding us up. The floor needs some replacement blocks but our contractors cannot find them anywhere. Anyone know where we can get them? Otherwise plan B – lino. Still lovely but the blocks would make it very special. The cloisters are looking great. We will be replacing the windows for warmth but work still needs to be done to insulate the roof. That may have to wait. We are getting the rest of the furniture – folding tables and chairs. Some crockery is still needed.

Fr. James Mallon, the Canadian priest who wrote *Divine Renovation*, will be leading a day, at Holy Trinity Church, Brompton, London, on Wednesday, 9th. March. The day is entitled “Divine Renovation-where to start”. Deacon Francis and I have booked tickets (free) on <http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/divine-renovation-where-to-start-tickets-42560995082>. We invite you do the same ASAP. It is one answer to our parish prayer for the renewal of our parish.

Watch the official trailer for Wim Wenders’ new film, **Pope Francis - A Man of His Word**. This documentary is intended to be a personal journey with Pope Francis, rather than a biographical documentary about him. The pope’s ideas and his message are central to this documentary, which sets out to present his work of reform and his answers to today’s global questions. From his deep concern for the poor and wealth inequality, to his involvement in environmental issues and social justice, Pope Francis engages the audience face-to-face and calls for peace. In cinemas from 18th. May

Little Mick’s Spot (paws for thought). I have been writing to you for over a year now, 5th, February, 2017. This is how I started. *“Let me introduce myself. I am Little Mick, I actually rule the Priest’s House. To humour Peter I call him Top Dog of the pack, TD for short, and that is how I will always speak of him. I won’t tell you what I actually THINK of him. Anyhow, I am the real one in charge no matter what he thinks. Over the coming weeks I will give you little insights into the crazy house in which I live”*.



Reflecting on this I don’t think I’ve done the job as well as I should have. I mean this is a crazy house for a little dog, indeed for anyone. I don’t deny that life can be good. I do get my fair share of tasty bits and I am able to keep myself fit. Lots of people come and make a fuss of me but I can’t stand door bells. I can’t any peace. They annoy me and make me bark. They go all the time. I try and get a bit of a kip, and the door bell goes. Up I have to get and bark until TD opens up. Since TD stopped opening the door after dark things have certainly got better. Then he has this new gadget. He can see on his phone who is at the door. It is useful – and keeps us safe. Anyhow, be sure I will let you know the comings and goings in this house. I’ll search out the secrets and let you know.

These are the editorials in this week's Tablet

Cardinal Kevin Farrell, prefect of the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life, provided Mary McAleese with a great publicity boost by banning her participation in a conference on women's rights to be held at the Vatican. The conference was moved to the Jesuit Curia office nearby, and the former President of Ireland did not disappoint. The Catholic Church, she said, was an "empire of misogyny". Power lay "among a hermetically sealed cosy male clerical elite ..." There may be worse examples of institutional misogyny in the world, but her latter point hit its target. What she is describing is clericalism, a caste system which elevates the ordained Catholic priesthood onto a pedestal and downgrades those not of this caste to a lower status. Especially if they are female. Dr McAleese is a forthright advocate of women's ordination. The explanation for Cardinal Farrell's "no-platforming" her may lie in the ruling by Pope John Paul II that the issue of women priests may not even be discussed. That was and is an unacceptable limitation of freedom of speech, and it is more and more disregarded. If the grounds for not ordaining women are sound they should stand up to critical examination. Clericalism is a related issue, but separate. Why should women want to join an institution that is, in Dr McAleese's words, "a cosy clerical elite", whether entry is restricted to men or not? Would adding women to it cure it of clericalism? Before the issue of ordaining women can be properly tackled, it surely has to be asked, what is the point of ordaining men? And what sort of men, by what preparation process? And that relates to the current concern of every bishop –with a steady decline in clergy numbers, how to attract candidates to the priesthood? Urging congregations to pray for vocations has not been enough. A thorough rethink of seminary training is overdue. The new guidelines for priestly formation issued in December 2016, reminding us that the Church needs "holy, healthy and humble priests", made a start. But it would be helpful to replace the old emphasis on "formation" with a more person-centred vocabulary. Seminarians should enjoy a much broader syllabus, and be taught in much more open institutions. Wherever possible, they should be educated alongside lay men and women. The seminary system dates from the sixteenth century, and aimed to produce experts in the Catholic faith. That's all well and good; but there are other needs too. Modern priests should also be mature human beings who can understand the modern world without being absorbed by it. A lot of their work will be akin to social work, for which they should be prepared. Above all they must be "people people" –which of course the best already are. They must not assume they will be leaders; they are to be servants. The ability to work in a team is essential. And need they all be unmarried? A bold reform of seminary education is needed if clericalism in all its forms is to be dealt a fatal

There is growing unease among the government's backbench supporters at one more dose of austerity. But "unease" grossly understates the feelings of those in the firing line. Those who can barely scrape a living are about to be hit with a savage wave of cuts, totalling about £2.5 billion. With the economy on the mend, as the Chancellor Philip Hammond claimed in his spring statement this week, this seems like a travesty of social justice. This is the third year working-age benefits (i.e. not pensions) will be frozen, affecting almost 11 million families. It is equivalent to a reduction of three per cent, the largest since the freeze began. And the damage to British living standards from Brexit is still to come. On top of this the family element of support for new tax credit and universal credit claims is being withdrawn. According to the think tank the Resolution Foundation, this will cost many families up to £545 per annum, saving £200m this year. It will affect 400,000 families. Some £400m is being saved by the withdrawal of support for third and subsequent children, which affects 150,000 families and leaves them nearly £3,000 per annum out of pocket. And working families will be severely hit by the government's decision to save £200m from the new universal credit scheme by giving lower entitlements than under existing arrangements. All these cuts come on top of cuts in previous years. For a government that says it is on the side of children and young families, it is the very opposite of a preferential option for the poor. Even Iain Duncan Smith, the former Tory leader who as a minister introduced universal credit, has complained that the cuts will not achieve the chief aim of this reform, which was to ensure people were better off in work than out of it. So the universal credit scheme, which is being extended to the whole country, has become just one more way of making the poor poorer, to save the government money. If this does not sound like good sense from a moral point of view, it is even less sensible economically. It takes money out of the economy –money which could be in circulation as its lifeblood. If someone buys food or clothes, that purchase benefits not just the shopkeeper but those who work for them, who in turn earn more money to spend themselves. This is how the Keynesian multiplier works, whereby economic activity generates more economic activity further down the line. Keynes is out of fashion in government circles, which prefer what has been called "handbag economics", or, by its critics, sado-economics. A prudent household aims to keep its spending within its income, and if it exceeds it, it must cut back. So Mr Hammond's deceptively attractive defence is that the country must live within its means. So he slices the welfare budget again, like a mediaeval physician letting more blood out of a patient. The reality is that relentless cuts, with apparently no end in sight, are not only killing the patient but undermining support for the government –all the more so in the light of Theresa May's repeated boast that it is on the side of those families which are "just about managing". Many of them are about to find out how hollow this sounds.