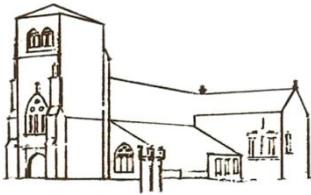


Newsletter for the parish of St. Anne & St. Bernard.



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Ascension Day

28.05.17

Scripture readings. There are two accounts of the “farewell” of Jesus in today’s Mass, one in Matthew’s Gospel, the other in the Acts of the Apostles. Both are included in today’s Scripture readings. Today’s readings also include this prayer from St. Paul which dazzles in its wonder, its promise and its demands –

*“May...the Father of glory give you a spirit of wisdom and perception of what is revealed,
to bring you to full knowledge of him.
May he enlighten the eyes of your mind
so that you can see what hope his call holds for you,
what rich glories he has promised the saints will inherit
and how infinitely great is the power that he has exercised for us believers”.*

Today’s feast is less concerned with saying how Jesus returned to the Father than with the fact that he is in heaven. The Ascension proclaims the victory of Jesus. Death, and with it sin, have been overcome. It proclaims the new way in which God is present with his people – through the Holy Spirit.

The Gospel declares the mission of the new Church, seen to be arising out of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, looking outwards beyond immediate horizons to the unknown future to which God was leading it. The first reading, from the Acts of the Apostles, written by Luke, looks forward to this mission of the Church and to the final return of the Christ who has ascended to the Father.



The apostles are assured that the Risen Christ will never leave them, that the Holy Spirit will make them his witnesses. There is opened up to them a vision beyond their wildest dreams. The Church is here to stay – until the final glorious return- and the whole of humanity is open to its embrace. The era of the Holy Spirit has arrived. The Spirit is the great and ultimate gift of God, the fulfilment of the saving work of Jesus.

*The Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name,
will teach you all things and remind you of
all I have said to you*

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 those times – and any other time you need

Mass this week is as follows -

Saturday	5.30 p.m.	Parishioner
Sunday	10.30 a.m.	Carmen Sanchez
Tuesday	12.00 noon	Esther's intentions
Wednesday	12.00	Fr. Philip Inch
Thursday	12.00	Tommy
Friday	12.00	Jim Harding
Saturday	5.30 p.m.	Parishioners

The **Co-Ordinating Group** meets next Saturday, 3rd. June, to prepare for the next Parish **Assembly** which takes place on July 1st. To prepare for the Assembly the **Co-ordinating Group** will meet on 3rd. June at 10.00 a.m.

There will be a meeting of the **Liturgy and Pastoral Group** next Wednesday morning at 10.00 a.m. in St. Bernard's. Everyone is welcome.

Will the various group leaders please prepare your notes to report to the 3rd, June Co-ordinating group.

Next **Men's meeting** 5th. June. St. Bernard's. 7.30 p.m. All men welcome

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

Youth Pilgrimage to Lourdes. This week and next our altar servers will be selling tickets for a raffle to raise money towards the Lourdes pilgrimage of two of our friends who are altar servers, Adhanon and Kusquum. The winning tickets will be drawn next Sunday, 4th. June, after Mass.

Money Report. The collection last weekend was **£496.40**. Add on £624.80 from standing orders and tax returns to make a total of **£1,121.20** **Thank you**

Catholic Pic, special edition. To celebrate the Golden Jubilee of the opening of the Metropolitan Cathedral the Catholic Pic is producing a bumper edition, and we have been sent extra copies. Please take an extra copy to give to a Catholic who would not normally receive one.

Care for our common world. This week's tip. Share your car rides to school and work.

Parish response to Pope Francis: Syrian Refugee Scheme.

Pope Francis, in the Year of Mercy, invited parishes to provide shelter for a refugee family. Our Justice & Peace group would like to start a conversation with neighbouring parishes to see if there is support for joining the Community Sponsorship Scheme. The Scheme is part of the government's Syrian Refugee Resettlement Programme. That Programme works through local authorities. But now groups, like parishes, can sponsor a family under the Community Sponsorship Scheme, and provide them with the shelter and security they need. We would like to talk with other local parishes with a view to, between us, providing housing, some limited financial support, education, employment and welfare advice to one family. The Archdiocese has approved and begun to brief parishes on the Community Sponsorship Scheme, and there is already one successful parish venture in Salford which is offering advice and support to those interested. In the coming weeks we will provide more information about the Scheme, and then we would like to put it to the Parish Assembly on 1 July for approval to proceed with discussions. In the meantime please approach Terry or John Phillips if you would like more details.



Our Noddfa retreat was most enjoyable. Twenty five of us went altogether. The weather of course was wonderful and a great help. The mornings were spiritual. The afternoon was outward bound, enjoying the scenery of North Wales, and in the evenings we socialised and listened to Joe Prendegast's shaggy dog stories, Eddie's jokes, various tales and we sang to Lol's accompaniment.. The Sisters looked after us very well and clearly enjoyed us being there. We will obviously want to return there before too long. It is wonderful to have such an asset so close and so beautiful. I spent the Tuesday afternoon enjoying a wonderful drive from Carnaervon Castle, by Snowdon and the Llanberis Pass, visited the Swallow Falls and then called on some friends nearby. For my companions it was their first visit to North Wales. How they enjoyed it!!

Free holiday in Penmaernmawr from 4 -8. June. Pay only for food - self catering.

This hotel/hostel was booked for a week but used only for the weekend 2-4 June. That leaves it free for the rest of the week and made available to us. There are fourteen double rooms and two large dormitories, presumably one male and one female. There has been a lot of interest shown but there is only a week to organise it. It will be arranged on a first come first served basis. Deacon Francis has agreed to organise it.

His phone number is 0151 724 4937. Transport hopefully would be on a similar basis to the retreat. Those with cars transport the others. You could stay until the Friday but the Thursday is election day and people want to vote.

The news just out of the death of 28 Coptic Christians is terrifying. Pray fore those frightened people.

Little Mick's Spot (paws for thought). Did you see the Echo headline last Monday? *Crowds flock to see Little Mix.*



I was quite chuffed, expecting the bell to be going all day. I was a bit miffed when I learnt it wasn't me at all but a pop group. Their loss! Thank God this hot weather has finished. I've known nothing like this before. Then TD expects me to go chasing after a ball - in this heat! Expecting me to run miles and all he does I throw the ball. I soon let him know he could do his own ball chasing. And he had to because I stopped getting it. I was just too hot and bothered. I did make a bit of a fuss of him though, when he returned from Noddfa. I do have to humour him after all. I don't like him walking out on me. We

have just taken in a new house mate, Alex. He joins Boubker and Amin. I don't envy Amin. As a good Muslim he has just started Ramadan. I would find it impossible not to eat during day light hours, but not to drink water in the heat we have just had!! As I have said before I am not a religious little dog, but I do admire someone who does that.

Manchester Tragedy. Other people seem to utter better and more sensible words than I can. Yet again I present a Tablet editorial to help us reflect on what our response should be. The Tablet's heading is *Response to terror must not be hatred*.

Anti-terrorism experts always have to point out that while the security services have to be successful all of the time, terrorists only have to succeed once. And the terrorists know that, which is why they keep trying. Prior to Manchester's murderous attack on an audience mainly of children and teenagers, British security services are said to have thwarted at least a dozen terrorist plots. In many cases, the necessary tip-offs came from family, friends and associates of the plotters, often from within the Muslim community. It is essential to the campaign against Islamist terrorism, therefore, that the goodwill of the Muslim community be maintained, not least because one of the aims of the terrorists themselves is to drive a wedge between Muslims and the wider society. It is both sides' responsibility to ensure they do not succeed. Monday's atrocity came at the end of a pop concert by the American singer Ariana Grande, before an audience of more than 20,000 in a huge arena in the centre of Manchester. The suicide bomber positioned himself by the main exit, which thousands of people would be passing through on their way out. Many of Ariana Grande's fans are teenagers and even younger. For many, the concert had been eagerly anticipated for several weeks as a special treat. Many younger children were accompanied to the concert by a parent, and many of those who went alone or with friends were due to be met at the exit by someone older, who would see them safely home. All this compounds the tragedy. Among the condemnations from world leaders that followed, one struck a particular chord. The Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull termed it an "attack on innocence". It was a calculated assault on what ordinary people hold most precious – the lives and happiness of their vulnerable offspring. It rouses a primitive instinct in all of us of protective anger, an instinct the whole of society makes its own, out of indignation and solidarity. But our response also has to be balanced, intelligent and discriminating. If greater surveillance of the general population is necessary, notwithstanding some inconvenience and some loss of privacy, it is a price that we should consider paying. This includes giving closer attention to the role of social media, not only in passing direct information helpful to would-be terrorists, for instance on bomb making, but also in disseminating propaganda. Opposed and condemned by mainstream Muslim opinion, there is nevertheless a strain at the edge of Islam which rejects everything modern and Western, especially everything American. It is readily propagated by social media. Combined with a fundamentalist reading of certain Islamic texts, this can seem to validate a philosophy of violent jihad. It could persuade an unbalanced and ill informed young man that killing innocent people can serve a wider purpose, and is worth dying for. Social media networks like Facebook will have to ask themselves whether they can sustain the position that they are only distributors of such material, not its publishers. They say they therefore have no legal or moral responsibility for the content they circulate except that which their own customers object to, and even then somewhat patchily. Society seems to be coming to the conclusion that this is not good enough, and safeguards may have to be imposed externally. Closer attention also needs to be given to the way fundamentalist interpretations of Islam have spread in Muslim communities in the West, not just through social media but through the foreign sponsorship of individuals and institutions. Donald Trump, on his presidential visit to Saudi Arabia, seemed unaware of the way Wahhabism, the ultra-conservative version of Sunni Islam officially practised there, has been disseminated abroad for decades by giving money to mosques, madrasas and imams so long as they follow Wahhabism – or its even more extreme version, Salafism, of which violent jihadism is an ugly offshoot. Most British Muslims or their ancestors are from rural Pakistan, and they were not familiar with Wahhabist or Salafist doctrines before they arrived. But poor and struggling communities were grateful for grants from overseas to help them establish some social and religious infrastructure in their adopted country. And they needed imams, who would often be available from abroad and who would be heavily influenced by Wahhabism. It encourages a separatist culture rather than respect for indigenous values, and it therefore presents a barrier to integration. Muslim leaders such as the late Sheikh Zaki Badawi tried to counter this by training imams in Britain. To see Mr Trump praising the Saudi autocracy's leadership in the fight against Islamist extremism suggests he does not understand the complexity of the issues, to put it kindly. Or that he puts selling arms to Saudi Arabia as a higher priority. Mr Trump was fishing in even more dangerous waters when he stood at a rostrum in Riyadh to condemn Iran, paradoxically on the day after the Iranian people had democratically re-elected a relatively moderate pro-Western leader. Many of the bloody and bitter conflicts in the Middle East have at least one sectarian dimension, an aspect of the historic schism between Sunni and Shia Islam. These conflicts can manifest themselves in terrorism. But they also reflect the rivalry for influence in the region between the United States and Russia. This divide is most obvious in Syria, where Russia supports Shia-backed Assad, while America supports Assad's Sunni enemies. But there are echoes of it across the region. The American foreign policy preference is for a bipolar world-view, divided simply between good and evil. But that is not so different from the philosophy of the terrorist, who sees himself as a soldier in an apocalyptic clash of civilisations. The common humanity that Mr Trump appealed to in Riyadh, and again in Jerusalem and Rome, has to include Shia Muslims as well as Sunni Muslims. And it will not thrive without a tolerant and respectful approach to religious differences, building on the good that exists in every faith and rejecting the seeds of conflict. That is the ultimate lesson of every terrorist outrage, the vile Manchester attack included. Whatever leads to hate must be cast out, wherever it exists.

