OUR LADY OF LOURDES CHURCH In NEW MILTON Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth 15 Mount Ave, New Milton. BH25 6NT. Parish priest: Father George Ngwa



Church opening hours 7am to 7pm. From November 07.30- 17.00

# 31<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the Year Year A 5 November 2017

## ARE CATHOLICS RIGHT TO PRAY FOR THE DEAD?

Last Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> November the Church celebrated the Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed or All Souls Day, a day when we remember all who have died. During this month of November, Catholics continue to pray for the deceased, trusting them to God's loving mercy. For most Catholics, the idea of praying for the deceased is really second nature. We have blessing prayers for the body of someone who's just died; we have wake services, funeral masses, graveside services, and often memorial Masses on the anniversary of someone's death. It has become quite common when people die to display flowers or candles to remember their passing. This gesture is done instinctively to honour their memory, perhaps even as a way of offering a prayer for them. We seem to all want to find a fitting way to remember those who have left us. Unfortunately to some people, this doesn't appear to make much sense if any at all. Once someone has passed on, they are in God's hands, so what is the point in all that prayers? They are facing God's judgment, so what can our prayers accomplish? Well, for those who have not completely turned away from God; but who really loved God and tried in their own little way to honour, serve and obey him; we believe our prayers for them can accomplish a lot.

The practice of praying for the dead is rooted first in Christian belief in the everlasting life promised in Jesus' teachings and foreshadowed by his disciple's experience that God had raised him from the dead. After death, even though separated from our earthly body, we continue a personal existence. It is as living persons that God invites us into a relationship whose life transcends death. Praying for the dead has further origins in our belief in the communion of saints. Members of any Christian community who are living often assist each other in faith by prayers and other forms of spiritual support. Christians who have died continue to be members of the communion of Saints. We believe that we can assist them by our prayers, and they can assist us by theirs.

Our prayers for the dead begin at the moment of death. Often family members will gather in prayer around the bedside of the person who has died. The Order of Christian Funerals includes a Vigil Service for the deceased, which can be held in the home, in the church, or in a funeral home chapel, the funeral Mass and the Rite of Committal (which generally takes place at the burial site). The prayers express hope that God will free the person who has died from any burden of sin and prepare a place for him or her in heaven. Death remains a mystery for us. Yet Christian language evokes a hopeful imagination in the presence of death, an assurance that our love, linked to Christ's love, can help bridge whatever barriers might keep those whom we love from fully enjoying the presence of a loving and life-giving God.

The custom of praying for the dead is rooted in the very nature of heaven. The Bible tells us that, there can be nothing imperfect in heaven. When describing the vision of the New Jerusalem, God's eternal kingdom, the book of Revelation 21:27 says that "nothing unclean will enter it." Unfortunately, many people who die have not lived as perfect human beings, and so do not die in a state of perfection. They are not yet capable to enter heaven and see God face to face. At the same time, they have not made the choice to totally separate themselves from God. They may have expressed regret for their sins and been forgiven, but their love of God at the time of their death may not have been as profound and perfect as it should have been. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states: *All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven.{ cf. CCC 1030 } The souls of these individuals have not yet been completely purified.* 

of their sins. They must undergo purification after death, a fact which demonstrates that God's mercy does not stop at the moment of death. Instead, Divine Mercy continues even after that moment to prepare a soul to receive God's loving embrace in heaven.

How can we describe Purgatory? A common description from Church tradition speaks of a cleansing fire. In particular, St. Paul records: *If anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or straw, the work of each will come to light, for the Day will disclose it. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire [itself] will test the quality of each one's work. If the work stands that someone built upon the foundation, that person receives a wage. But if someone's work is burned up, that one will suffer loss; the person will be saved, but only as through fire. { cf. 1 Cor.3:12-15 }* 

The imagery St. Paul uses is that of the refining of metals. Fire is used to test and refine precious metals by bringing them to their melting point. At this high temperature, anything impure which has not melted can then be removed. In a similar way, in Purgatory, anything inauthentic in a person's soul is removed. The pain is caused by being separated from God. We can imagine this as the refining fire of divine love, which purifies a soul and prepares it to enter heaven.

The Church today refers to the souls in Purgatory as "our brethren ... who having died are still being purified" { cf. Vat II Lumen Gentium 51}. They continue to be important members of the Church, of the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ according to the belief in the communion of saints. We are able to assist the faithful departed by our prayers, just as they can also help us by their prayers .{ cf. CCC 958 }

Prayers for the dead have been offered for many centuries. The earliest reference in the Bible is found in the second book of Maccabees. {The books of Maccabees were among the latest written books found in the Old Testament. They recount the struggle of the Jewish people for freedom against the Seleucid Empire, around 100-200 years before the birth of Christ. They are written from an Orthodox Jewish point of view. The second book of Maccabees tells how Judas Maccabaeus, the Jewish leader, led his troops into battle in 163 B.C.} Judas Maccabaeus was an important Jewish Army General. He led his army to success in a hard fought battle. The following day he, along with his soldiers, returned to the battlefield to gather together the bodies of the soldiers who had fallen in battle. They wished to give them a respectful funeral. To their surprise, they found that the soldiers were wearing pagan amulets and had hidden them under their tunics. They had been taken from enemy soldiers who had died in battle {cf. 1 Maccabbees 5:58}. According to the book of Deuteronomy 7:25-26, these items should have been burned. Instead, these soldiers hid them, most likely out of greed.

Judas Maccabaeus and the surviving soldiers knew that they had committed a grave sin, an action that was forbidden by the Law. Yet they also knew that these men were otherwise good people, people who had died virtuously by courageously defending the law of God. They immediately offered prayers and sacrifices for these Jewish soldiers who died wearing pagan amulets. The second book of Maccabees states:

Turning to supplication, they prayed that the sinful deed might be fully blotted out... He then took up a collection among all the soldiers, amounting to two thousand silver drachmas, which he sent to Jerusalem to provide for an expiatory sacrifice. In doing this he acted in a very excellent and noble way, inasmuch as he had the resurrection in mind ... Thus he [Judas Maccabaeus] made atonement for the dead that they might be freed from their sin { cf. 2 Maccabbees 12: 42-43,46.}.

Judas and his companions prayed that God might deliver these soldiers from their sin and assist them on their journey to eternal light. This is the first indication we have in the Bible that the prayers of the living can help deliver the dead from any sin that might separate them from God's presence and prevent them from finding eternal peace and life.

The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council mentioned that the Church has honoured the memory of the dead from the beginning { cf. Lumen Gentium no. 50.} The Christian community in Rome gathered in the cavelike tombs under the city of Rome, which we call *Catacombs*, bear evidence that members of the Roman Christian community gathered there to pray for their fellow followers of Christ who lay buried there. By the fourth century prayers for the dead are mentioned in Christian literature as though they were already a longstanding custom. They believed that their prayers served to assist those who had died, just as the prayers of the dead could also aid the living members of the community. The Catholic Church has taught for centuries that our prayers are of assistance to those who have died. We commend their soul to God's mercy and pray for them. We can help them not only by our prayers, but also by offering a Mass in their name, by giving alms, by indulgences or other works of penance done for their benefit { cf. CCC 1032}

This November, a month dedicated to prayer for the Holy Souls in Purgatory, let us remember to keep them in our prayers out of love. Let us remember that prayers can be extremely powerful in assisting the souls of our loved ones in their journey to attaining eternal life and peace.

Father George Ngwa

There is an extra Mass this Sunday at 5.30pm celebrated by the Auxillary Bishop of Bamenda with coffee in the hall afterwards. This weekend there is a second collection for Bamenda

**November Dead List**- please take an envelope from St Joseph's Chapel and fill it with a list of the names of your deceased relatives and friends. There will be a Mass for them on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> November at 3pm.

## Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> November Bingo and Fish and Chip Supper ( after the evening Mass in the Hall)

Get your ticket from Susie or Catherine. £10 per ticket. In aid of Church funds. Bring your own drinks but condiments will be provided.

**The Next Living Rosary Group meeting is on Monday 6<sup>TH</sup> November at 5.45pm.** Please contact Mary if you are unable to attend. If you don't she tries to contact everyone who was missing as she has the worry that someone is ill or has dropped out of the group. Her telephone number is 01425 614391.

#### Pre Christmas Party

On Sat December 16th there will be a pre-

Christmas party. There will be a meeting in the hall after Mass on Friday 24th November to discuss this event. Please support this meeting if you can. Thanks, Robin.

**Catholic Legacy Week- 5-11<sup>th</sup> November**. For more information contact catholic Legacy on 020 7095 5370 or go to <u>www.yourcatholiclegacy.org.uk</u>. Leaflets at the back of the church.

Dont forget to subscribe to the Portsmouth e-news. And find out more about:

- The Statement on Abortion from the Catholic Bishops
- The Church's teaching about human embryos
- Supporting Refugees and Migrants
- Romero: Heartbeat of El Salvador
- Luther on Conscience and Christianity: A blessing and a curse
- 5 Reasons Why Catholics Don't Evangelize

**Parish Giving.** – the relevant forms have now been colour- coded to make things clearer and are available at both entrances of the Chruch.

<u>Green forms</u> If you are able to support the Parish by donating regulary and can do this by standing order or direct debit then please fill in the relevant side of the **green form** and hand it into the office.

<u>White forms</u> If you pay tax, and give to the Church via envelopes, standing order or direct debit please make sure you have filled in the white form and given it to the office so your contributions are gift aided.

Any questions? If you have any questions regarding parish giving, please give your contact details to the Parish secretary and someone from the Finance Committee will be in contact with you.

Thank you very much for all you do and give to this Church.

Sunday	5	November	31 <sup>st</sup> Sunday of the year Bamenda Sunday	<ul> <li>18.00 Vigil Mass – missa pro populo</li> <li>10.00 Holy Mass – Harriet Pendy</li> <li><i>RIP</i></li> <li>17.30 Holy Mass – Canon Kevin</li> <li><i>O'Connor RIP</i></li> </ul>	Coffee & tea in hall after Mass
Monday	6	November	Ordinary time		5.45 rosary group
Tuesday	7	November	St Willibrord	<ul><li>18.00 Exposition, 18.30 Rosary</li><li>18.50 Benediction</li><li>7 pm Holy Mass – Holy Souls</li></ul>	7 pm Tap classes
Wednesday	8	November	Ordinary time	09.00 Exposition, 09.30 Rosary 09.50 Benediction <b>10.00 Holy Mass</b> – <i>Hilary Sendall's</i> <i>intentions</i>	
Thursday	9	November	Dedication of Lateran Basilica	<ul> <li>9.00 Exposition, 9.30 Rosary</li> <li>9.50 Benediction</li> <li>10.00 Holy Mass – Stephanie</li> <li>Rogers &amp; a young woman previously ill</li> </ul>	Rosary intention for peace in the world
Friday	10	November	St Leo the Great	<ul> <li>9.00 Exposition, 9.30 Rosary</li> <li>9.50 Benediction</li> <li>10.00 Holy Mass - Winifrede</li> <li>Macqueen Peterson RIP</li> <li>11.30 Funeral Mass - Francis</li> <li>Mincham RIP</li> </ul>	
Saturday	11	November	St Martin of Tours	<ul> <li>9.30 Divine Mercy chaplet</li> <li>veneration of the relic of Sr Faustina</li> <li>10.00 Holy Mass – Margaret Boland</li> <li><i>RIP 43rd anniversary</i></li> <li>18.00 Vigil Mass – Julia Marcin RIP</li> </ul>	Confessions after morning Mass & before Vigil Mass
Sunday	12	November	32 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the Year	<b>10.00 Holy Mass</b> – Brigid Horan RIP <b>Remembrance Sunday</b>	Coffee & tea in hall after Mass

**Prayer to St Michael, said at the end of Masses.** St Michael, the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray; and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly host, by the power of God cast into hell Satan and all the evil spirits who wander through the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen

Collections 7/8 October			Sat 4Nov	Sun 5 Nov	Sat 11 Nov	Sun 12 Nov
loose	395.04	Reader	P Thorpe	M Tanner	M Newland	S Ramsay
envelopes	183.20		B Dempster	J Thomas	M Hobbs	J Thomas
Oct. Bank giving-	EMHC	B Coyne	M Tanner	M Harwood	P Clarke	
S/O £819 D/D £266 Thank you			J Coyne	A Joseph	R or M Yon	S Salinger
			M Newland	J Nichols	C d'Espagnac	A Caneda

#### Parish priest: Father George Ngwa email: gngwa@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk emergency mobile: 07475753040 Parish office: 01425 614968 Hall Booking via Parish Office <u>ololnewmilton@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk</u> Secretary: Johanna Thomas Wed/ Fri 10.45-12.00. Our Parish Live streaming: <u>http://churchservices.tv/newmilton</u> Website: wwwnfwp.org.uk

Safeguarding: Katherine Dempster Tel: 01425 611643 email: katherine.dempster@btinternet.com