

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 **07.30- 17.00 (during winter)**



4th Sunday of Lent Year B 11 March 2018

TRACING OUR DISCIPLESHIP TO THE EARLY CHRISTIANS

Speaking to Nicodemus this Sunday Jesus says “And indeed, everyone who does wrong hates the light and avoids it, for fear his actions should be exposed; but the man who lives by the truth comes out into the light, so that it may plainly be seen that what he does is done in God.”

Discipleship was always within the life of the church. It was together that Christians encouraged one another in the practice of virtues and through persecutions in life. Christians were different, and they were intentionally different. Their spiritual lives as faithful disciples brought them into tension with the culture around them. They lived as members of the Roman Empire, obeying its laws and participating in its civil life so long as that life did not conflict with their Christian identity. They were expatriates of the kingdom of God in the empire of Rome. When people became Christians, their lives became oriented around life in Christ together. The church and its members became the centre of the convert’s world, and their faith became the measure by which they lived. There was no protest against the prevailing laws of the empire that were in conflict with the gospel message. The Christians simply did not do what was legal but against the gospel. They understood that their status as a new people held them to a higher standard of living in the world.

This group identification held the early Christians together and encouraged them to continue in the faith. No one was ever alone in the faith or on an exclusively personal journey. Every Christian together was a part of the kingdom of God and the new, redeemed creation. By intentionally being unique and different, by intentionally creating a new people in the world, Christians reminded themselves that they were not only purchased at a great price; they also endured and supported one another at a great price — because no one else would do it.

Rather than striving to blend in to the world around them, Christians strove to be disciples together. Their distinct identity shaped that discipleship because it reminded them that they had a higher allegiance than to any one ethnic group, language or empire. The Christians of those first three centuries saw themselves as a set-apart group that used certain discipleship tools — corporate worship, prayer, Scripture and the Eucharist — to receive more and more of God’s presence in their lives and ultimately experience sanctification collectively.

Means of Grace - Prayer, Scripture, worship, the Lord’s Supper and Christian community are the means of grace by which the community grows.

The early church taught its first Christians prayers and how to pray. It was one of the ways the church catechised its people and encouraged them in their spiritual life and growth. Correct prayer, taught by Christians to new Christians, was among the most important means of ensuring the correct “faith that was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 1:3). Since prayer is vitally important for a relationship with God, the early church wanted to ensure that its members were addressing the correct God and using correct theology when they did speak to that God. This was modelled in the worship services as Christians together prayed and listened to prayers said on their behalf, for which they responded in agreement, “Amen. So be it.”

The early church made full use of every passage of the Old Testament for the purposes of teaching, exhorting and evangelizing. Early Christians completely integrated the Old and New Testaments and created a poetry to the faith. And for them, Scripture was read at length in the context of worship. As scriptures were read, they were seen as a unified voice spanning God’s work in Israel through the life of the church, and they were interpreted together, always pointing to Jesus Christ as the fulfilment of every passage. The subject material

was Jesus, no matter what book or passage was read and the application was how, therefore, the followers of Jesus were to live with one another and in the world.

The worship service itself was a time when Christians were catechized in a general way. It was a time to encounter the Scriptures. It was a time to be encouraged by one another to keep the faith and persevere through whatever trials they were encountering at the time. It was a time to be reminded that Jesus Christ is God and that the individual members of the church were integrated into His life, His body. The focus was on God and how to be faithful disciples. If non-Christians attended a service, and they frequently did, since the church experienced explosive growth for the first three centuries — they had already been intrigued by the lives of the Christians they knew. The reason they came was not to be the centre of attention or the focus of the service, but to learn what these people truly believed and why.

For these early Christians, the Eucharist was a main form of discipleship as well. It was the climax of every service they celebrated. For the entire part of the service leading up to the Eucharist, the people were being raised up to the throne of God in heaven. Their prayers focused them on God, petitioning God to create the kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. The reading of Scripture and expounding on it showed how God had been acting throughout history to prepare the world for the coming of Jesus Christ, and how Christ was still present in the world through the church, His body. Finally, in the Eucharist, as the people had been ascending to heaven, heaven came down to earth as God in Transubstantiation changed the bread and wine so that the people in Christ actually received Christ. In Holy Communion, heaven and earth met.

In their Community celebrations they knew they were standing in the presence of the God of all who gave all for them. They knew that, by receiving the sacrament, they were receiving more of God within them for their transformation and empowerment to be the faithful disciples they were called to be.

Holy Communion was the climax of corporate worship. It was an extensive exercise in prayer — prayer that used numerous scriptural references from both the Old Testament and what would become the New Testament. It was here, in the sacrament, that the church saw fully and completely what the potential cost of discipleship entailed: death. Yet it was literally good news because, despite His death, Jesus Christ was currently present with them in this very act of Holy Communion.

So, what does it mean to be a disciple?

Love Jesus above everyone and everything. The first Commandment calls for this and Christians adhere to this with devotion. While disciples love their family, friends and even foes, they put the Lord above all else and it's evident in their priorities. Money, career, ambition may be a part of their lives, but these things and other material interests never come before Christ and following His Word.

Selflessness and sacrifice. Disciples always put others first and in many ways put other's needs before their own. This is evident in disciples' selfless deeds and many acts of kindness.

Humility and modesty. To be humble is to be a disciple of the Lord, because the Lord Himself was truly humble. Just remember that He came into this world a man, and how he came, in a stable, laying in a manger. He humbled Himself to everyone and yet He was God. Christ's disciples are also modest, not just in appearance but also in the way that they act.

Dedicated to following Christ and the Commandments. A disciple is committed to the Lord and eager to follow His Word and act in ways that are pleasing to Him. This doesn't mean that a disciple is perfect or that she always does the right thing.

Is not easily influenced by the world. In fact, a disciple is indifferent to the standards of the world and is not affected by trends or fashion.

Have self-control in emotions and actions. This is evident in the way she behaves, regardless of how others act toward her. If she is criticized, ridiculed or persecuted for her faith, she responds with kindness, just as Jesus did. After all, Christ called us all to do as He did.

Live devout life in the Word. A disciple is a light that shines in the world and reflects the Lord in her actions and lifestyle. Her faith is reflected in her words and deeds. "You are the light of the world," Jesus said in

Matthew 5:14-16. "A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lamp stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."

Professes the Word regularly and effectively. A disciple speaks the Word of the Lord in regular conversation, not in a preachy way, but naturally because it's what she believes. And she's so eager to share the Word because her desire is to introduce the Lord to everyone.

Love as Christ did. Jesus is love and He was clear when He called all His followers to love as He loved. Disciples understand that it's not easy to love as the Lord did, but know also that to love others is to love Him, and he/she at least tries to.

Recognize that all of us need God's strength to be a true disciple. A disciple knows her weaknesses and understands that she cannot live in this world without the strength of the Lord. And that suffering is only bearable when the Lord is with her.

Father George Ngwa

The Parish will begin Community Study Group on Wednesday 22nd March at 5 p.m.

Women's World Day of Prayer

As you know the ecumenical service due to be held at our Church was postponed due to the extreme weather on that Friday. Sadly, it has now been cancelled. If you had been planning on attending or would like a copy of the Service some are available at both entrances to the Church for you to have. If you would like to donate to the charity please put an offering in an envelope clearly marked for the Womens' World day of Prayer in the collection plate next weekend or hand in to the office. At the back of the Service booklet it explains where your money will be spent. Thank you.

Chrism Mass Tuesday 27th March

Please contact Catherine d' Espagnac, who is kindly organising a coach from this church again this year. Her contact number is 01425 615349.

NB. The response has not been as good as previous years and often there is a drop out on the day. If numbers are not increased then the coach may have to be cancelled as it is more expensive to hire this year.

There are posters in the Church advertising a drama and narration of the Stations of the Cross which is taking place on 24 and 25th March at Christchurch St Joseph's Church. Please read for further information.

Lenten lunches will take place in the hall each Friday in Lent between 12-1.30. They will consist of soup, rolls, butter and cheese. Cost £3.50. Proceeds will go to the Parish funds. Thank you, Robin and team.

Advance Notice: There will be Holy Mass on Monday 19th March at 10.00am preceded by Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

In case you were not aware: The Feast of the Annunciation has been transferred to Monday April 9th this year because March 25th is Palm Sunday.

PALS - MARCH DAY OUT - TUESDAY 13th. Because our March meeting had to be cancelled I will phone those concerned to confirm number and times.

Our Monthly Lunch is 22nd - at venue 12:00 for 12:30 Jane

Happy Mother's Day!

2nd collection this week – Clergy Assistance Fund

4th Sunday of Lent Year B 11 March 2018

Sunday	11	March	4th Sunday of Lent	18.00 Vigil Mass – Living Rosary group for their dedication 10.00 Holy Mass – Missa Pro Populo	Coffee & tea in hall after Mass
Monday	12	March		No Mass	
Tuesday	13	March	of the 4 th week of Lent	18.30 Stations of the Cross 19.00 Holy Mass – Mary & Roy <i>56th wedding anniversary</i>	7 pm Tap classes in hall
Wednesday	14	March	of the 4 th week of Lent	9.30 Stations of the Cross 10.00 Holy Mass – Loftus – in thanksgiving 12.00 Funeral Mass of Barnard Sidney William Maynard	Confessions after Mass
Thursday	15	March	of the 4 th week of Lent	18.00 Exposition, 09.30 Rosary 18.30 Benediction 19.00 Holy Mass – Patrick Porter <i>RIP</i>	NB EVENING MASS TODAY Rosary intention for peace in the world
Friday	16	March	of the 4 th week of Lent	09.30 Stations of the Cross 10.00 Holy Mass – Hilary Sendall's intentions	Confessions after Mass Lenten lunch 12.00-13.30 Cost £3.50
Saturday	17	March	St Patrick	09.30 Divine Mercy chaplet veneration of the relic of Sr Faustina 10.00 Holy Mass – Pam Loftus <i>birthday intentions</i> 18.00 Vigil Mass – Sheila Vernon <i>for her birthday & a healthier year</i>	Confessions after morning Mass & before Vigil Mass
Sunday	18	March	5 th Sunday of Lent	10.00 Holy Mass – Brigid Horan <i>RIP (5th anniversary)</i>	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 3/4 March	
loose	£ 289.78
envelopes	£251.90
Thank you for your continued support	

	Sat 10 Mar	Sun 11 Mar	Sat 17 Mar	Sun 18 Mar
Reader	M Hobbs	P Caffyn	K Dempster	C Barrett
	C d'Espagnac	P Caffyn	J Marriott	C Barrett
EMHC	F Fallon	A Caneda	M Harwood	A Joseph
	J Thomas	J Kurian	C d'Espagnac	J Nichols
	M Newland	M Tanner		M Buckland

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Parish office: 01425 614968 Hall Booking via Parish Office

ololnewmilton@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Secretary: Johanna Thomas Wed/ Fri 10.45-12.00.

Our Parish Live streaming: <http://churchservices.tv/newmilton>

Website: www.nfwp.org.uk

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

PLEASE NOTE: No morning Mass on Thursday.