

# 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 7.00am- 7.00pm



## ELEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME Year B 17<sup>th</sup> June 2018

### Am I guilty of Self-righteousness as a Christian?

We can say that *self-righteousness* is “the projection of one’s own thinking of holiness, with the attempt to making all around see and know that one is such, while at the same time becoming intolerant of the opinions and behaviour of others. Self-righteousness, is the idea that we can somehow generate within ourselves a righteousness that will be acceptable to God (Romans 3:10). Although any serious Christian would recognize the error of this thought, because of our sin nature, it is a constant temptation to all of us to believe we are, or can be, righteous in and of ourselves.

Self-righteousness is just another kind of sin, which is mostly concealed. We don’t call it a sin, although it is the most dangerous kind of sin. We seldom repent of it, because we are not aware we are self-righteous. Self-righteousness can make a person think he is better than others, while he is the worst of all sinners. Self-righteousness has many disguises. It can be false humility, hypocrisy, pride, good works without faith, works to attract attention, lording over others, persecution, condemnation, perfectionism, etc. Sadly, most of us who are followers of Jesus or claim to be, are self-righteous people.

A self-righteous person looks good on the outside, by his/her good works and moral standing, but he is despised by God because his faith is not relying on God, but on his own efforts. *“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside, but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness (Matthew 23:27-28).*

Self-righteousness is extremely dangerous, because a self-righteous person is living in deception. A self-righteous person is self-assured, who thinks he has earned merits to get to heaven while rejecting Jesus, the only way to heaven, and so is destined for eternal damnation. *For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:20).* These are profound words, A self-righteous person will not enter the kingdom of heaven. God’s word is truth. He does not say anything lightly or casually. When God speaks, He means what He says.

I believe none of us want to be shocked on the day of judgement, that we are labelled as self-righteous and refused into God’s kingdom. This is not a sin you want to ignore or take it lightly. It is easier for a sinner to repent and enter God’s kingdom than for the one that is self-righteous. A sinner is aware of his own inadequacy and is in need of a saviour. The self-righteous are ignorant of their sins and take pride in their own works to attain salvation and refuse to receive the true righteousness by faith. *For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God’s righteousness. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes (Romans 10:3-4).*

A self-righteous person thinks he/she is better and superior than others. He lets others know about their wrongdoings, not for the sake of correcting them and leading them to the path of righteousness, but rather to criticize them and make them feel unworthy. When he repents of his sins, instead of receiving God mercy, he feels guilty, condemned and strives to earn the mercy by doing good deeds. A self-righteous person feels he needs to be perfect before he prays for healing or deliverance of others. His prayer is not based on faith in God, but on his abilities. He merits on his own righteousness instead of the righteousness of God. He merit on his own credentials and moral standard instead of totally submitting to the will of God and receiving His grace, mercy and righteousness.

### ***How can we move from self-righteousness to the righteousness of Jesus Christ?***

We repent of our sins and receive His mercy. We give up our self-righteousness that represents pride in exchange for His righteousness. We die to our sinful self so that God can reign in us. We become righteous when we become nothing and He becomes everything for us.

We become righteous when we find our worth and value in not what we do, but who we are in Jesus Christ. *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast (Ephesians 2:8-9).*

### **Jesus and St. Paul on self-righteousness**

In the New Testament, Jesus and the apostle Paul came down particularly hard on those who attempted to live in self-righteousness. Jesus' condemnation of self-righteousness was especially harsh in His treatment of the Jewish leadership of the time. Six times in Matthew 23, Jesus condemns the scribes and Pharisees for rigidly adhering to their legalistic traditions in order to make themselves look better to others. The parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector was specifically told by Jesus to "some who trusted in themselves, that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt" (Luke 18:9–14). Over and over again in the Gospels, Jesus clashes with the Pharisees and scribes about true righteousness. At the same time, He spends a great deal of time and energy warning His disciples about the dangers of self-righteousness, making it clear that, without Him, they could do nothing (John 15:5).

Paul's treatment of self-righteousness is no less scathing than Jesus' was. He began his great argument in Romans for the grace of God by condemning the Jews' self-righteous trust in circumcision (Romans 2:17–24). He follows that up in chapter 10, saying that the Jews tried to gain acceptance with God based on their own righteousness, demonstrating ignorance of the true righteousness of God (Romans 10:3). His conclusion is that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, not man. St. Paul told the Galatians that, if righteousness could come from their own actions, then Jesus died "for no purpose" (Galatians 2:21)

### **Self-righteousness measured by roles within the church.**

Many roles within the church are taken on because these people want to make a show of who they think they are or have become rather than for the service of God and humankind. How many souls have been lost because self-righteous people acting or working in the church even as leaders have neglected to act in love, or have passed a negative remark at another practising Christian? How many people have left the church due to pressure put upon them when they needed help and prayer? Nothing can make up for taking away the salvation of even one person, yet the self-righteous person thinks he /she is working for God.

The troubling thing is that such self-righteousness is a sign of a total lack of self awareness. In the parable of Luke 18:9-15 the tax collector prays, "God, have mercy on me a sinner," while the Pharisee prays, "God, I thank you that I am not like other men — robbers, evildoers, adulterers — or even like this tax collector." What differentiates these two spiritual types is that the self-righteous person is not self aware; the self-righteous person, unlike the "tax collector," will not be humble or in the case of sin, apologize to God or to humankind. The self-righteous person does not even seem to know that there is anything like humility, since humility is all that is totally lacking in him/her. Yet this is dishonest because, deep down, maybe in his/her subconscious, he/she is compensating for something – a total lack or absence of what should actually be there. And what is the self-righteous person repressing? The fear, indeed perhaps the certainty, that there is no such thing as humility or forgiveness. He/she will not, therefore, apologize because he does not believe in forgiveness. And, tracing this back to the Lord's Prayer, he/she does not believe in forgiveness because he/she will not forgive others.

We all have that Pharisee deep down inside of us, tricking us into becoming the judge of others. Even the act of identifying self-righteous Pharisees can be pharisaic! We therefore must become simple, judging no one. Remember the prayer of the tax collector who beat his breast and cried "God, have mercy on me a sinner." Refusal to judge, acknowledgment of God's mercy, and honesty about one's own guilt are the beginning of self-awareness, which brings freedom from the burden of self-righteousness. My small recommendation, then, is to take up this simple prayer of humility as your own. Repeat it a few times when you wake up and a few times when you go to sleep. Whenever you have a spare moment in the day, say that prayer under your breath: "Jesus, have mercy on me, a sinner." You will find that the more you say it from your heart, the less you will be able to judge others, the less anxiety you will have about your own worth, and the less worry you will have about a guilty conscience. Without this kind of prayer, we are all just Pharisees.

**Fr. George Ngwa**

## Message from Fr. George

We are back from our Pilgrimage to the Holy Land. It was an amazing experience. I am expressing my thoughts and experiences in our next Newsletter. Many thanks for your prayers and material support to have made this happen.

Bishop Philip has invited me to join him at St John's Cathedral Portsmouth at 11am on Thursday 21st June for the Annual School's Mass when Schools from across the diocese of Portsmouth will be invited to pray especially for the Children and the Archdiocese of Bamenda. We shall be having an evening Mass then and thanks be to God, England will not be playing any of her matches that evening!

**Day of Reflection on the Sacred Heart of Jesus** A day of reflections on the Sacred Heart of Jesus from the French School of Spirituality will take place on Sunday 24th June 2018 from 10.00am – 4.00pm at Saint Joseph's Centre, 8 Lyndhurst Road, Ashurst, Southampton, SO40 7DU. The day will include Holy Mass for that Sunday and a simple lunch. We would very much appreciate a donation of £22.50 to support our missionary activity. If you would like to book a place please contact Father Des on [fatherdes@icloud.com](mailto:fatherdes@icloud.com) or leave a message on 02380292337.

**Appointment of Refugee Project Development Officer – A Message from Fr. John Lee** In 2015 many of us with our Bishop were concerned about the unfolding tragedy of Syrian refugees who were compelled to leave their homeland seeking safety and a new life. Responding to this crisis our Bishop created the Diocesan Refugee Response Working Group (DRRWG), chaired by Fr John Lee and Fr Peter Hollins, with a variety of interested volunteer members, and asked them to explore how the Diocese can and should respond to this crisis. In addition to creating educational resources for parishes (available at [www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/rrwg](http://www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/rrwg)), this group wrote a detailed and robust proposal for a project, in which the Diocese would be the lead sponsor on Community Sponsorship for Syrian refugees. As part of this, they recommended the recruitment of a Refugee Project Development Officer and detailed the specifications for this role. This officer will assist interested parishes, pastoral areas or other community groups to put in applications to directly sponsor a Syrian family through the Community Sponsorship Scheme. We are delighted to announce the appointment of Rosemary Lennon to the newly-created post of Refugee Project Development Officer. We will be hearing from Rosemary in a future edition of Enews. To find out more about Community Sponsorship please see [www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-sponsorship-how-you-can-make-it-happen](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-sponsorship-how-you-can-make-it-happen).

**PACT – Prisoners, Families, Communities, A Fresh Start Together** This organisation currently has over 500 volunteers across England and Wales but it needs more to support ex-prisoners, prisoners' children and families and also prisoners themselves. There is a need for volunteers in the Hampshire area, the role being 1:1 mentoring in the Prison and in the Community. If anyone is interested, please email Kelly Rodgers on [Kelly.Rodgers@prisonadvice.org.uk](mailto:Kelly.Rodgers@prisonadvice.org.uk) or call her on 0786 836 232.

**The Catholic Truth Society** warmly invites you to A Mass of Thanksgiving in honour of its 150th Anniversary. The Mass will be celebrated by His Eminence Cardinal Vincent Nichols, on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> June, 2.15pm, at Westminster Cathedral. No invitation is necessary to attend the Mass. For more information [onefifties.org/events](http://onefifties.org/events)

**Ladies Bible Study Group.** We are an Ecumenical Group, meeting weekly in each other's homes and are looking for new members. If you would like to find out more, please phone Jill Parsons on 01425 291 961.

### ***Join us for a Bereavement Support Workshop on Saturday 7th July***

*You are warmly invited to a workshop that will look at the process of a parish helping people going through dying and bereavement. Our main speaker will be Kathryn Turner, head of the Department for Spirituality in the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle. There will also be a few speakers from parishes in our diocese. Please come if you are at all interested in learning more, even if you or your parish aren't currently doing any work in this area. It will be held at Milner Hall, next to the Winchester parish centre, between 10am - 12.30pm. Please book a free place by contacting Philippa Foster, the Leader of the Pastoral Care Services team in the diocese, at [pfoster@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:pfoster@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk) If you cannot come but would be interested in registering your interest in this important pastoral care work, please email Philippa too, who is looking to build connections and community within the diocese.*

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Sunday	17	June	11 <sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time	18.00 Vigil Mass – 10.00 Holy Mass – <i>Patrick Sheehan (sick)</i>	Coffee & Tea in Hall after Mass
Monday	18	June			
Tuesday	19	June	11 <sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time	18.00 Exposition, 18.30 Rosary, 18.50 Benediction 19.00 Holy Mass – <i>Katherine Harradence (RIP)</i>	
Wednesday	20	June	St. Alban Martyr	09.00 Exposition, 09.30 Rosary, 09.50 Benediction 10.00 Holy Mass – <i>Mary &amp; Jack Loftus (RIP)</i>	Confession
Thursday	21	June	St. Aloysius Gonzaga	18.00 Exposition, 18.30 Rosary 18.50 Benediction 19.00 Holy Mass – <i>Clara Fitzgerald (RIP)</i>	No Morning Mass
Friday	22	June	SS John Fisher & Thomas More	09.00 Exposition, 09.30 Rosary 09.50 Benediction 10.00 Holy Mass – <i>Dennis Piggott (RIP)</i>	Confession
Saturday	23	June	Our Lady of Saturday	09.30 Divine Mercy Devotion 10.00 Holy Mass –  18.00 Vigil Mass of 12 <sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time- <i>Elza (RIP)</i>	17.30 Confession
Sunday	24	June	THE NATIVITY OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST	10.00 Holy Mass – <i>MPP</i>	Coffee & Tea in Hall after Mass

**IMPORTANT: MASS OFFERINGS/intentions** If you would like a Mass said for your intention then please take one of the envelopes on the shelf by the Confessional and fill in your details, add an offering and pop it into the general collection at one of the weekend masses. The next available day will be booked in the diary. If you wish a specific date, please give plenty of time and phone the office during opening times or call in to check the date is available. Thank you. Suggested minimum offering £10

Collections 9/10 <sup>th</sup> June	
loose	£419.33
envelopes	£217.00
Thank you for your continued support	

	Sat. 16 June	Sun. 17 June	Sat. 23 June	Sun. 24 June
<b>Reader</b>	C.d'Espagnac	C.Fradd	J.Marriott	S.Ramsay
	K.Dempster	C.Fradd	T.Gearey	J.Thomas
<b>EMHC</b>	K.Dempster	A.Caneda	M.Newland	Akhil Joseph
	T.Gearey	Joseph Kurian	F.Fallon	J.Nichols
	B.Dempster	M.Tanner	J.Thomas	M.Buckland

**Please Note that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Collection this weekend is for Day for Life**

**Parish priest: Father George Ngwa**

email: [gngwa@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:gngwa@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk) emergency mobile: **07475753040**

**Parish office: 01425 614968** Hall Booking via Parish Office

[lolnewmilton@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:lolnewmilton@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk)

**Secretary: Lizzie Davies** Wed & Fri 10.00h-14.00h

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

Website: [www.nfwp.org.uk](http://www.nfwp.org.uk)

**Safeguarding: Katherine Dempster** Tel: **01425 611643** email: [katherine.dempster@btinternet.com](mailto:katherine.dempster@btinternet.com)

**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