

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 - 6.00pm**



FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT YEAR "C" 07TH APRIL 2019

LENT BRINGS OUT THE BEST IN EACH ONE OF US.

The season of Lent makes us to take the long journey back to ourselves so as to (re)discover who we truly are in the practice of the faith. I suppose we all know that as Christians we are meant to grow up, to mature. We begin as infants in the faith and need to develop into adults. The New Testament writers insist that we must all make this transition from milk to meat, from the children's table to the grown-up's feast. And yet even though we are aware that we must go through this maturing process, many of us are prone to measure maturity in the wrong ways. We are easily fooled. This is especially true, I think, in a tradition like the Reformed one which (rightly) places a heavy emphasis on learning and on the facts of the faith.

The Bible is the means God uses to complete us, to finish us, to bring us to maturity.

When Paul writes to Timothy, he talks to him about the nature and purpose of the Bible and says, "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). That word *complete* is related to maturity. Paul says that Timothy, and by extension me and you and all of us, is incomplete, unfinished, and immature. The Bible is the means God uses to complete us, to finish us, to bring us to maturity.

Christian maturity requires a radical reordering of one's priorities, changing over from pleasing self to pleasing God and learning to obey God. The key to maturity is consistency; perseverance in doing those things we know will bring us closer to God. These practices are referred to as the spiritual disciplines and include things such as Bible reading and Bible study, prayer, communion community, and stewardship. No matter how hard we might work on those things, however, none of this is possible without the enabling of the Holy Spirit within us. St. Paul in his letter to the Galatians 5:16 tells us that we're to "walk by the Spirit." The Greek word used here for "walk" actually means "to walk with a purpose in view." Later in the same chapter, Paul tells us again that we're to "walk by the Spirit." Here, the word translated "walk" has the idea of taking things "step by step, one step at a time." It is learning to walk under the instruction of another—the Holy Spirit. Being filled with the Spirit means we walk under the Spirit's control. As we submit more and more to the Spirit's control, we will also see an increase in the fruit of the Spirit in our lives (Galatians 5:22–23). This is characteristic of spiritual maturity.

When we become Christians, we are given all we need for spiritual maturity. St. Peter tells us that divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and excellence" (2 Peter 1:3). God alone is our resource, and all growth comes by grace through Him, but we are responsible to make the choice to obey. Peter again helps us in this area: "For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in

the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:5–8). Being effective and fruitful in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus is the essence of spiritual maturity

But what does it mean to be a mature Christian? I think we tend to believe that mature Christians are the ones who know a lot of facts about the Bible. Mature Christians are the ones who have their theology down cold. But look what Paul says: “That the man of God may be complete, *equipped for every good work*.” Paul does not say, “That the man of God may be complete, knowing the books of the Bible in reverse order”. He does not say, “That the man of God may be complete, able to provide a structural outline of each of Paul’s epistles.” Those are all good things, but they are not Paul’s emphasis. They may be signs of maturity, but they may also be masks that cover up immaturity. When Paul talks about completion and maturity, he points to actions, to deeds, to “every good work.” The Bible has the power to mature us, and as we commit ourselves to reading, understanding, and obeying it, we necessarily grow up in the faith. That maturity is displayed in the good works we do more than in the knowledge we recite. And this is exactly what God wants for us—he wants us to be mature and maturing doers of good who delight to do good for others. This emphasis on good deeds is a significant theme in the New Testament (see Ephesians 2:10; Titus 2:14, etc) and the very reason why God saved us.

Spiritual maturity is better displayed in acts than in facts.

You can know everything there is to know about theology, you can be a walking systematic theology, you can spend a lifetime training others in seminary, and still be desperately immature. You will remain immature if that knowledge you accumulate does not motivate you to do good for others. The mature Christians are the ones who glorify God by doing good for others, who externalize their knowledge in good deeds.

Of course facts and acts are not entirely unrelated, so this is not a call to grow lax in reading, studying, and understanding the Bible. Not at all! The more you know of the Bible, the more it can teach, reprove, correct, and train you, and in that way shape your actions and cause you to do the best deeds in the best way for the best reason. More knowledge of God through his Word ought to lead to more and better service to others. But in the final analysis, Christ lived and died so he could “redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession *who are zealous for good works*” (Titus 2:14). Knowledge of God and his Word is good. Knowledge of God and his Word that works itself out in doing what benefits others—there is nothing that glorifies God more than that.

STEPS TOWARDS CHRISTIAN MATURITY.

There are different ways of conceptualizing and articulating steps for moving people toward saving faith in Jesus, and then further into Christian maturity. The Bible gives all kinds of instructions, examples, and pathways to help move Christians with various backgrounds and personality types to engage more fully in the Great Commission.

1. Contact: Meet other Christians and remember their names. Learn how to specifically love and care for them. Learn the basics of who they are.

2. Converse: Get into the habit of asking good questions to generate meaningful conversations. Learn the art of drawing people out.

3. Community: As your neighbours and friends learn you are a Christian and begin to have meaningful conversations with you, introduce them to your Christian community. That should be your church family. Jesus taught that people will know that the Father sent him by our unity with one another. And Jesus tells us that people will know we are his disciples by our love for one another. But those apart from Jesus will not see our love for one another and our gospel unity in the midst of our differences without being exposed to our shared life as a church. I am not primarily referring to your church services but to the informal moments of friendship). So, find ways to bring them into your community.

4. Gospel: If you have had meaningful conversations with your friends and introduced them to your community life, at some point, sooner than later, you need to clearly explain the gospel to others and call them to respond.

5. Convert: If they have understood the gospel, call them to trust in Jesus Christ and turn from their sin.

6. Commit: Jesus never wants our faith in him to stay private. Truly trusting and following Jesus will be public. It's made public initially through baptism and formally committing ourselves to Jesus Christ's body, the church.

7. Grow: If the person is a committed member, you need to help him grow in *conviction* about what the Bible teaches and in *character* (how he lives). Continuing to disciple the convert with the Bible and theology will strengthen his conviction. Rebuke and correct him. Teach him to obey everything Christ commands (Mt. 28:20). Teach him to rebuke, correct, and restore you, as well. These interactions will strengthen his character as he kills sin and loves God more and more in practical, everyday decisions.

8. Go: Growth in Bible knowledge and personal holiness is never enough. We must serve others. Jesus tells us to go make disciples. So, teach him to go and help *others* move to the right. Train him to contact, converse, invite into community, share the gospel, convert, commit, and grow others in the church and in the neighbourhood. He will train others to go do the same. The more he does that, the more he moves to the right into Christlike love and maturity.

Fr. George Ngwa

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

EASTER FLOWERS DONATION The Parish flower arranging team , Veronica, Jan and myself will be arranging the Easter flower arrangements in the church on Easter Saturday, so I am asking for a donation to help with the cost of the flowers. Thank you in advance. I know you all appreciate the different arrangements throughout the year and your comments are much appreciated. If you would like to join our parish team please get in touch with me (01425 611643) Wishing you a very happy and joyous Easter
Katherine, Veronica and Jan.

NEW MILTON GOOD FRIDAY EVANGELICAL WALK –

10.45 Walk of witness, starting at 1045, and singing The Old Rugged Cross –and possibly how Great Thou Art – as we walk along. We will also bring church and church-together banners if we can find them, as it was felt that it would be good to give more indication of what we were walking for. Alison will be at the walk to help pitch the songs, but we hope to ask Chris Gilbert.

11.00 Hymns for the service itself: Amazing Grace (ordinary version); In Christ Alone; There is a Green Hill; When I survey. (well known to at least some of passers-by, most of whom are not especially young, we felt)! service sheets will be available.

GOOD FRIDAY COLLECTION May I remind you that it is customary (and mandated by the Holy See) for the collection taken at the Good Friday Liturgy of the Lord's Passion, to be for the care of the Holy Places.

CHRISM MASS 2019 - Tuesday 16th April -This year's Chrism Mass will be held on Tuesday 16th April at 11.00 am. in the Cathedral. If you wish to attend, please let Susie know. Only 7 places left.

FR. GEORGE NGWA – 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF PRIESTLY ORDINATION – Celebration on 12th May 2019 in the 10.00 a.m. Holy Mass and celebrations thereafter in our Parish Church. If you wish to make a donation to my celebration, you may do so by Bank Transfer into Fr. George's account as follows:-
Bank: Lloyds: Sort Code: 77-49-23 Account No: 72915960 Reference: Silver Jubilee Gifts. Alternatively, cheques can be given to our secretary – Lizzie Davies, made payable to Fr. George – Anniversary Gift.

PARISH STREAMING

Monthly Stats for March – Number of Viewers 7248 Number of Unique Viewers 1422

Saturday Vigil	06	Apr.	FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT YEAR "C"	18.00 VIGIL MASS of FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT YEAR "C" – <i>Mike Garbett (RIP)</i>	Coffee & Tea in the Hall after Mass
Sunday morning	07	Apr.		10.00 Holy Mass – <i>Daisy (Joan) Evans (RIP died 27.3.2004)</i>	
Monday	08	Apr.			
Tuesday	09	Apr.	Tuesday of the 5 th Week of Lent	18.25 Stations of the Cross 19:00 Holy Mass - <i>Mary Kellar</i>	
Wednesday	10	Apr.	Wednesday of the 5 th Week of Lent	09.25 Stations of the Cross 10.00 Holy Mass – <i>Kuntamma Chalko</i>	Confession after Mass
Thursday	11	Apr.	Thursday of the 5 th Week of Lent	09.0 Exposition, 09.30 Rosary, 09.50 Benediction 10.00 Holy Mass - <i>Derrick Hobbs</i>	
Friday	12	Apr.	Friday of the 5 th Week of Lent	09.25 Stations of the Cross 10.00 Holy Mass - <i>Irena Oleksik (RIP)</i>	Confession after Mass
Saturday	13	Apr.	Saturday of the 5 th Week of Lent	09.30 Divine Mercy Devotion 10.00 Holy Mass – <i>Jack Garahee (RIP)</i>	Confession after Mass
Saturday vigil Mass			Vigil Mass of Palm Sunday	18.00 - Vigil Mass of Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord - <i>Tom Harwood (Thanksgiving)</i>	17.30 Confession
Sunday	14	Apr.	PALM SUNDAY of the Passion of the Lord	10.00 Holy Mass. – <i>MPP</i>	Coffee & Tea in the Hall after Mass

IMPORTANT – MASS OFFERINGS/INTENTIONS. If you would like Holy Mass said for your Intention(s), then please take one of the envelopes on the shelf by the Confessional and fill in your details, add an offering and place 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 notice and phone the office during opening times or call in to check the date is available. Thank You!

Collections 30/31 March		Sat. 6 Apr.	Sun.7 Apr.	Sat. 13 Apr.	Sun. 14 Apr.
loose	£328.86	Reader C.d’Espagnac	S.Ramsay	K.Dempster	Annice Joseph
envelopes	£191.00	J.Marriott	S.Salinger	B.Dempster	A.Punchekuun
		EMHC B.Dempster	J.Kurian	M.Newland	S.Salinger
		K.Dempster	M.Tanner	F.Fallon	J.Nichols
Thank you for your continued support		T.Gearey	A.Caneda	M.Harwood	M.Buckland

Parish priest: Father George Ngwa

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Parish office: 01425 614968 Hall Booking via Parish Office

lolnewmilton@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Secretary: Lizzie Davies Wednesday 12.00h-16.00h & Friday 10.00h-14.00h

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

Website: www.nfwp.org.uk

Safeguarding Minister: Tony Harwood Tel: **01425 511 952** or email hughharwood314@hotmail.co.uk

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.