

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 07.30am – 4.00pm



THE SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME- YEAR "A" 16TH FEBRUARY 2020

We Must Learn To Distinguish Right from Wrong.

“Do not imagine that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish but to complete them. In truth I tell you, till heaven and earth disappear, not one dot, not one little stroke, is to disappear from the Law until all its purpose is achieved.”

Every human being is created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27; James 3:9). Part of what it means to be in God’s image is that we have a conscience that instinctively recognizes good and evil and tells right from wrong. Every civilized culture in the world has adopted similar standards for its people based on this inherent understanding of good and evil. Murder, theft, and deceit are universally understood to be wrong. Sometimes depravity overrides that knowledge, and a people group chooses to value evil rather than forbid it, as in the case of infanticide practiced by the heathen nations surrounding Israel (Leviticus 18:21; 2 Kings 23:10).

Due to our sin nature, we tend to excuse the evil in ourselves (Romans 5:12; Proverbs 20:20; Jeremiah 2:35). A continual pattern of excusing evil leads to a hardening of the conscience. Romans 1:28 gives God’s response to those who persist in evil: *“Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done.”* There is a point at which God lets go. Those who insist on keeping their sin can now sin boldly and suffer no pangs of conscience. They believe they have transcended conscience and outsmarted God. But their judgment will come when they stand before Christ (Hebrews 9:27; Malachi 3:5).

As darkness is defined by the absence of light, sin is defined by the absence of goodness (James 4:17). Since God is the very embodiment of good (Psalm 86:5; 119:68), anything contrary to His nature is evil (Romans 3:23). We learn to distinguish good from evil by getting to know God. His Word is the foundation for understanding Him (Psalm 1:1–2; 119:160; John 17:17). The closer we draw to the holiness of God, the worse sin appears (Isaiah 6:1, 5). A t-shirt may appear white against a black wall. But when you place that shirt on newly fallen snow, it appears quite dingy. Similarly, our attempts at goodness look quite dingy when placed next to the holiness of God. As we enter His presence, we start to notice how self-centered our thoughts and actions are. We see our own greed, covetousness, lust, and deceit for the evils that they are. It is only in God’s light that we begin to see ourselves clearly.

We also learn to distinguish between right and wrong by knowing the Word. It is the Bible, after all, that delineates what is sinful and what is not. The author of Hebrews speaks of those who are immature in their faith, who can only digest spiritual “milk”—the most basic principles of God’s Word (Hebrews 5:13). In contrast to the “babes” in Christ are the spiritually mature, “who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil” (Hebrews 5:14). Note that a Christian’s spiritual senses are strengthened through “constant use” of the Word. The ability to tell right from wrong, to distinguish between Christ’s doctrine and man’s, comes by studying and applying God’s Word.

God’s Word is filled with examples of those who did right and those who did wrong. Those examples are there for us to learn what God is like and what He desires from us (1 Corinthians 10:11). Micah 6:8 gives a brief summary of God’s desire for every person: *“He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”* Malachi 3:18 makes it even clearer. God says, *“And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not.”* Here the Lord is equating righteousness with

serving Him. If good is defined as serving God, then evil is rejecting God and refusing to serve Him. Regardless of how philanthropic a person may appear to others, his good works amount to little if they are done for selfish reasons. If we make it our goal to seek God and honour Him in everything we do (1 Corinthians 10:31), we will understand right and wrong and know that our life choices are pleasing to Him (Jeremiah 29:13; 1 Peter 3:12; Psalm 106:3).

Some Reflections on “Right” and “Wrong”

The Prophets - Sinful human beings are ever attempting to blur the distinction between “right” and “wrong.” This inclination reaches far back into antiquity. The Book of Proverbs states: “He who justifies the wicked, and he who condemns the righteous, both of them alike are an abomination unto Jehovah” (17:15). Later, the prophet Isaiah affirmed: “Woe unto them who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!” (Isa. 5:20). Amos spoke of those who “turn justice to wormwood, and cast down righteousness to the earth” (5:7).

Right and Wrong as divine revelations: - “Right” and “wrong” exist. They are not merely evolved inclinations that were humanly contrived in order to introduce a sense of order and security into society. Nor are “right” and “wrong” subjectively determined so that, practically speaking, each person functions as his own law-maker. Rather, morality is to be measured by the laws and principles of divine revelation, as made known in the inspired writings of the Bible. Ultimately, morality is grounded in the very nature of God Himself. “[A]s He who calls you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy” (1 Pet. 1:15). Though such a concept is almost wholly rejected by modern society, there is ample evidence to support it.

Some of the principles contained in Scripture that assist us in putting “right” and “wrong” things into proper focus.

(1) **“Wrong”** is not determined by the perpetrator’s moral sensitivity to an act. A wrong act is still wrong whether or not the violator is aware of it, or whether or not he feels comfortable with the situation. Saul of Tarsus did not know that he was doing wrong when he persecuted Christianity (see Acts 23:1; 26:9; 1 Tim. 1:13), but he was violating the will of God nonetheless. Ignorance is no excuse (Acts 17:30). In modern society, for example, many have entangled themselves in adulterous “marital” relationships. Frequently it is argued that such liaisons may be sustained because the parties “did not know” the intricacies of God’s marriage law when the unions were made. The logic is fallacious. Will a similar argument be offered to defend the concept of same-sex “marriages”?

(2) **“Right”** is not established merely by what man is able to accomplish by means of his genius or ability. Pragmatism does not provide the criteria for ethics. One human being can take another’s life, but that does not make the act moral. Two unmarried youngsters are able to conceive a child apart from the sacred vows of matrimony, but the act is illegitimate nonetheless. “Might” does not make “right,” and autocratic decisions relating to moral matters are condemned in Scripture (see Hab. 1:11). *Radical attempts at human genetic engineering, or cloning, may be accomplished through the manipulation of genetic laws, but the achievement, in and of itself, does not license the practice as ethical. The issue ever must be this: Is a procedure consistent with the principles of God’s inspired revelation?*

(3) **“Right” and “wrong”** are not determined by what is legal. In the Roman world of the Caesars, infanticide was legal, but it was not moral. In some ancient cultures, a woman was not a person; she was mere property to be abused, or disposed of, at the whim of her husband. There are few who venture to defend the ethics of this custom. Homosexuality is legal, but it is moral perversion (Rom. 1:26-27). The destruction of human life by means of abortion has the sanction of civil law, but the practice is abominable before the eyes of the Creator (Prov. 6:17).

(4) **“Right” and “wrong”** are not grounded in what a majority of the population “feels” is ethical. Jesus Christ is a King; He has not implemented a democracy to determine, by majority vote, how human beings ought to live. In the first place, man can never be his own guide. (Jer. 10:23). Second, fallible opinion, multiplied a thousand times, does not change wrong into right. Moses warned: “You shall not follow a multitude to do evil” (Ex. 23:2). It hardly is necessary to remind ourselves that the path of the majority ultimately is the way of destruction (Mt. 7:13-14).

(5) **“Wrong” is wrong**, whether or not one is ever caught. In the isolated environment of ancient Egypt, separated from his kinsmen, Joseph might well have rationalized an illicit relationship with Potiphar’s wife on the ground that his indiscretion would never be known by his family. His principle of operation, however, was: “How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” (Gen. 39:9). *There will be a time when the “skeletons come out of the closet” and “the chickens come home to roost.” Many things that have been perpetrated in darkness will be revealed in light, and secret evils will be proclaimed from the rooftops (see Lk. 12:3). Secrecy does not sanctify!*

(6) **“Wrong”** does not become right by virtue of passing time. It is certainly the case that the public’s conscience sometimes becomes dull with the passing of years, so that what once was horrifying eventually becomes commonplace. But wrong still is wrong, though a millennium passes. Eventually, there will be accountability (2 Cor. 5:10).

May God help us to examine our practices by the illumination of His glorious Word (Psa. 119:105), and to determine “right” and “wrong” issues upon that reliable basis. Fr. George Ngwa

ANNOUNCEMENTS



CAFOD LENT FAMILY FAST DAY – Friday 6th March

This Lent CAFOD’s family fast day is an opportunity to reach out to some of the poorest , most marginalised of our sisters and brothers. Please consider eating a simple meal and put what you save in the CAFOD collection envelope. Through CAFOD’s global Church family your support can help those living in poverty overseas so many thanks for your donation.

RECORDINGS ON OUR LIVE STREAMING SITE. As you may know Masses, weddings, funerals and other services taking place in our church can be recorded via our live streaming, recordings are held by Church Services TV who host our live streaming site. CSTV have advised us that they can now only store recordings for a maximum of one year and that any recordings made before 1st January 2019 will be erased on 31st March 2020. All future recordings will be erased automatically after twelve months.

If you have any favourite recordings made before 1st January 2019 which you would like to keep you can download them to your PC. Go to <http://www.churchservices.tv/newmilton>, scroll down to ‘WATCH VIDEOS’, locate your recording via ‘SEARCH VIDEOS’ and click ‘DOWNLOAD’. If you would like any help with this, please contact Brian Dempster on 01425 611643.

PORTSMOUTH DIOCESAN PILGRIMATE TO LOURDES - 15th to 19th July 2020. Bishop Philip has sent out an invitation to join him in Lourdes this year. The Pilgrimage will take place from 15th to 19th July flying by charter aircraft direct to Lourdes from Bournemouth Airport, the cost of the Pilgrimage is £695 per person for a shared room. For further details and video please visit <https://vimeo.com/367708674>.

This also includes a **Youth Pilgrimage to Lourdes** and the costs for Youth Pilgrims is £545. The Catenians are offering a small bursary to those who participate in pilgrimages to Lourdes and all Youth Pilgrims are encouraged to apply. It would be wonderful if a young person (aged 16-25) or two or more from our Parish could attend this year’s Pilgrimage. For further information, a video can be viewed at <https://tinyurl.com/lourdesvid> or contact Fr. P.J. Smith at Portsmouth Diocese on 07780 221 686.

GAS LIGHTERS: We have made available 2 gas lighters on either sides of the Altars of St. Joseph and Our Lady, to facilitate our candle prayers devotions. These are kept secured by chains to prevent mobility and in strict control of our health and safety regulations.

THE SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – YEAR “A” 16TH FEBRUARY 2020

Saturday	15	Feb.	Vigil Mass of the 6 th Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year A	<u>18.00</u> VIGIL MASS of the 6 th Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year A – <i>Roy Fittsell (RIP)</i>	
Sunday	16	Feb.	SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME-YEAR A	10.00 Holy Mass - <i>Mary & Jack Conway (RIP)</i>	
Monday	17	Feb.			
Tuesday	18	Feb.	Tuesday of the 6 th Week in Ordinary Time Year A	18.00 Exposition, 18.30 Rosary, 18.50 Benediction, 19.00 Holy Mass - <i>Brigid Horan (RIP)</i>	
Wednesday	19	Feb.	Wednesday of the 6 th Week in Ordinary Time Year A	09.00 Exposition, 09.30 Rosary, 9.50 Benediction, 10.00 Holy Mass - <i>Nancy Currigan</i>	Confession after Mass
Thursday	20	Feb.	Thursday of the 6 th Week in Ordinary Time Year A	09.00 Exposition, 09.30 Rosary, 09.50 Benediction, 10.00 Holy Mass – <i>Ros Brundrett (RIP)</i>	
Friday	21	Feb.	St. Peter Damian	09.00 Exposition, 09.30 Rosary, 09.50 Benediction, 10.00 Holy Mass – <i>Tony Lennon (RIP)</i>	Confession after Mass
Saturday	22	Feb.	THE CHAIR OF ST. PETER	09.30 Divine Mercy Devotion 10.00 Holy Mass – <i>Holy Souls</i>	
Saturday vigil Mass			Vigil Mass of the 7 th Week in Ordinary Time Year A	18.00 - Vigil Mass of the 6 th Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year A <i>MPP</i>	Confession 5.30 pm
Sunday	23	Feb.	SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME - Year A	10.00 Holy Mass – <i>Margaret Morton (RIP)</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 08/09 Feb. 2020					
Loose	£291.05	Reader	B.Dempster	C.Barrett	J.Marriott
Envelopes	£159.00		K.Dempster	C.Barrett	G.Gordelier
		EMHC	M.Harwood	M.Buckland	F.Fallon
			T,Gearey	Akhil Joseph	M.Newland
Thank you for your continued support			C.d’Espagnac	J.Nichols	T,Gearey
					M.Buckland

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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