

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 –



SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT YEAR "B" 6TH DECEMBER 2020

LET US MIRROR THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

John the Baptist's life lessons are so relevant for our Christian life today. He is one of the most important and unusual people in the Bible. There are many aspects of great significance that we can learn from his ministry, as the last prophet to prepare the way for Jesus. He's the one who doesn't 'fit in' because John has a completely different view of how the world should be. Maybe you and me have met some people like that. They don't sit easily with people.

But there's more to him than the camel hair apparel and wild honey diet. His uncompromising call to holiness and personal change is a tough but necessary message to swallow. Nevertheless, John is intriguing, mysterious, unstinting in conviction and also a surprisingly popular figure in his time. He's not just the one who introduces Jesus to the world, he's a man and a ministry all of his own.

So why should we take notice and learn from him in our Christian life?

Because John the Baptist was 'the Greatest Man to ever live.' (Matthew 11:11). And he has a lot to say to us about how we live our life for Christ. Here are some significant life-changing lessons of John the Baptist's life and ministry and how they help us to grow in our discipleship.

We are not robots made to be the same – you are meant to be *different*.

From Luke's gospel, it's clear that John was set aside for a divine purpose. He was meant to be different. Israel was ruled by the most powerful empire the world had known, Rome. They were pagan whose rulers opposed the rule of Israel's God, while Israel awaited the promised Messiah to liberate them, **"and so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins"** (Mark 1:4).

The lesson for us as followers of Jesus is to be distinctive and set apart from those values that are opposed to God's values. Our ways of living and operating may not be in line with God's ways so we need to make personal changes, to repent to be truly different.

Do not always go with the flow - challenge the status quo.

What attracted people to John was the fact he wasn't 'business as usual' and he was popular for it. The temple authorities even got to hear of him, 'Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was', (John 1:19). John's alternative message attracted those disaffected with religion as it was, those who were looking for something more.

For us today, our faith needs to challenge the established form of religious expression. All traditions can get stale and lose its heart. But people today crave an authentic spirituality as much as they did two thousand years ago. Genuine seekers will go out into their own 'deserts', away from the 'business as usual', to find a more genuine way of living for God. This is as much a challenge to our own religious comfort and conformity as it was in his own time.

Always walk the talk - live what you believe.

He practised what he preached and his preaching was pretty straightforward; repentance This means a complete change of one's life. This also included the rite of baptism to signify the repentance of sin.

John lived his life completely consistent with his beliefs and calling because he had turned away from the standards of the world. He chose to live by God's standards.

This is just as difficult for us to do today. How do we live for God and not ourselves? We can't do both so a change of heart and mind to live a life consistent with God's standards is needed. It will be hard sometimes but the fruits of that life and decision are so worth it. God's amazing grace and mercy in Jesus will always inspire us to keep going.

Do not be in the centre or steal the show - lead people to Christ.

John's life had a single purpose: to prepare people for the coming of the Messiah. 'I am the voice of the one calling in the wilderness, "make straight the way of the Lord."' (John 1:23). John was a great prophet of God. You could say he was the last prophet of the Old Testament as he bridges the two covenants leading to Jesus. Yet he remained consistent in his calling, to prepare for the coming of someone greater. However great or small we think our calling, profession, career and ministry may be, it's irrelevant unless it's true purpose is to lead people to Christ.

When human ambition gets in the way of fulfilling God's purposes we diminish our true identity in Christ. John's life is a challenge to holiness and living truthfully.

Pride is mortal, humility is a virtue - be genuine in humility.

John had a following, he had disciples, he had a reputation. The very things that would make people proud but John's perspective was never on earthly glory, it was always pointing to the greater glory of God. Only a man as great as John could acknowledge his place in front of, Jesus. His purpose in life had been fulfilled. *We need to imitate this way of humility like John.*

Let doubts be the quest for genuine certainty - doubts are normal.

Sometime after John baptised Jesus, he began to hear news of what Jesus was doing. 'John's disciples told him about all these things. Calling two of them, he sent them to the Lord to ask, "Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?"' Luke 7:18-19. The life of Jesus had challenged even John's worldview and understanding of God. So he had doubts.

None of us has it all worked out and all of us can still be profoundly challenged by Jesus, no matter how young or old our faith. And at times we may even question whether we've got our faith right at all! This is no problem, it just needs us to trust, remain faithful and work it through, just like John.

Be forthright - oppose injustice and corruption.

John, in the tradition of the great prophets of Israel, railed against injustice. The law given by God was there to protect all people and it's kings were appointed by God to uphold righteousness. This was not the case in John's day. Herod Antipas had contravened Jewish law by marrying his brother's wife and he protested loudly about it as well as all the other evil things he was doing as ruler. But it all got too much for Herod (and his wife Herodias) so John was arrested and locked up deep inside his palace fortress.

It may not need us calling out in the desert like John but we can sure howl at the gross injustices in this world. Learning to see the world as God sees, to remember what he says is right and wrong should always drive us to put it right.

Act from your deep-seated convictions - don't compromise your convictions.

The story of John the Baptist's life takes an extraordinary gruesome twist. John had been languishing for a period of time in jail under Herod's control. When Herod's stepdaughter danced and pleased him in front of his guest; the price for this was that she could have in return whatever she requested. Herod's wife seized her opportunity for revenge on John and instructed her daughter, Salome, to request the head of John the Baptist on a platter. John was beheaded, his life ended as a martyr. But

John's witness and ministry were felt far beyond his own short life. He had awakened the people's conscience but paid the ultimate price.

Would we be prepared to face the same consequences for our faith as many Christians around the world have to do? And it's there that John's life is an inspiration for us. The last great prophet of the Old Covenant, a forerunner for the new. The impact we could have could be so significant if we pursued even just a little of God's righteousness. And in that, John the Baptist's life and ministry is an example for us all.

Fr. George Ngwa

ANNOUNCEMENTS

HOLY MASS BOOKING ON LINE DURING CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

Hampshire is still governed by Tier 2 Covid Restrictions, therefore, you will be able to attend Holy Mass on Wednesdays and Fridays at 10:00 a.m. and Sundays at 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. All other Masses will be available via Live-Streaming at <http://churchservices.tv/newmilton> and the Church will be open for *Private Prayer* on Wednesdays and Fridays after Holy Mass till 3:00 p.m.

It will still be necessary to restrict the number of parishioners in Church for each Mass to 30, therefore, you will need to book your place in advance. We now have an "on-line" booking system in place, which you can find by going onto our website at <https://www.nfwp.org.uk> and clicking on: **coronavirus-how-to-book-a-seat-for-mass-1**/(scroll down left hand column to CORONAVIRUS:Welcome to Our Lady of Lourdes, New Milton and click on CORONAVIRUS: How to book a seat for Mass) you will be directed to the following Links: Sunday 13th Dec. - <https://forms.gle/MHcXoPTtjuStRiwKA> Sunday 20th Dec.- <https://forms.gle/zADE9Y9LgRGbsEZw5>. If anybody does not have the facility to book on line, would they please contact Lizzie in the Parish Office on either a Wednesday between 12:00 noon and 3:00 p.m. or on a Friday between 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.

FROM BISHOP PHILIP - CLERGY CHRISTMAS DONATION This Christmas we celebrate and give thanks for all the dedication, guidance and care our priests give us throughout our Diocese and in each Parish. If you would like to give a gift to support our Parish Priest – Father George - in his vocation and mission, please visit our Parish Website or click on the link <https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/fundraising/new-milton-clergy-christmas-collection>

(As the chief shepherd, Bishop Philip and the diocesan curia have designed a webpage which will henceforth be used for the Christmas and Easter donations to the priests of the Diocese of Portsmouth. Many people showed their concerns when last Easter the closure of our churches greatly affected their willingness to do this according to their various dispositions. This website is so easy to use and the sum total collected transparent to all.)

NEW FOREST BASICS BANK (NFBB)First of all thank you to those who have given personal money donations through our church. These were gratefully received by NFBB. Thank you also to those of you who continually contribute with goods.We have been asked to donate, where possible, tinned meat/chicken/vegetable pies. Varieties made by Fray Bentos cost £2.00 each through any supermarket. Tinned vegetables are always needed. These items too are always welcome:- Jay cloths, washing up liquid, baby food, nappies for all toddler ages, toothpaste, tooth brushes, laundry detergents, tea, coffee etc., and as we move towards Christmas, seasonal goods.Thank you for your continued generosity.God bless you! Katherine Dempster

GIFT AIDThis is a good way of giving to our Parish because, provided you are a Tax payer, your donation will attract an extra 25%. If you are interested in joining the scheme, please contact Lizzie in the Office.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT during the COVID PANDEMIC. Whether or not you are a Gift Aider and you would like to continue supporting your Church through this difficult time, you may wish to organise a Standing Order arrangement with your bank to pay your collection directly into our Church bank account. Details as follows: - Lloyds Bank - Sort Code 30-93-04, Account No: 00883116, Account Name – PRCDTR New Milton. Or you may prefer to give your donation directly to the Office. Thank you! If you do decide to pay money directly into our Bank Account, it would be very helpful for our Treasurer if you could write what it is for in the Reference Box when paying on line, i.e. Church donation, Intention, Cafod etc.

LIVE-IN CARER/COMPANION - If you know of anyone who needs live-in care or companionship, please call Helen on 07867 978 558. Helen can offer excellent references, has DBS clearance and her own vehicle.

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT YEAR“B” 6TH DECEMBER 2020

Sunday Vigil	05	Dec.	Vigil Mass of the 2 nd Sunday of Advent Year B	6.00 p.m. Holy Mass – <i>Jean & Ray Carlile (Anniversary RIP)</i>	
Sunday	06	Dec.	SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT Year B	08:00 Holy Mass – <i>Mary & Jack Loftus (RIP)</i> 10:00 Holy Mass – <i>Douglas William Yon (RIP)</i>	
Monday	07	Dec.	St Ambrose	10:00 a.m. Holy Mass –	
Tuesday	08	Dec.	THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY Year B	10:00 Holy Mass – <i>For all the Souls of the Patackal & Vallomkunnel Families</i>	6:00-7:00 p.m. Rosary, Benediction
Wednesday	09	Dec.	Wednesday of the 2 nd Week of Advent Year B	10:00 a.m. Holy Mass – <i>Aleyamm Alex (RIP)</i>	6:00 – 7:00 p.m. Rosary and Benediction
Thursday	10	Dec.	Thursday of the 2 nd Week of Advent Year B Our Lady of Loreto	10:00 Holy Mass – <i>Derek Nash (RIP)</i>	6:00 – 7:00 p.m. Rosary and Benediction
Friday	11	Dec.	Friday of the 2 nd Week of Advent Year B	10:00 Holy Mass – <i>Thanksgiving for the Coronavirus Vaccine</i>	6:00 – 7:00 p.m. Rosary and Benediction
Saturday	12	Dec.	Our Lady of Guadalupe	09:30 Divine Mercy Devotion 10:00 Holy Mass – <i>Madeleine Newland (Intention)</i>	
Saturday Vigil			Vigil Mass of the 3 rd Sunday of Advent Year “B”	6:00 p.m. Holy Mass – <i>Rossa John (RIP)</i>	
Sunday	13	Dec.	THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT YEAR B	8:00 - Holy Mass – <i>Jane Sloman & Family (God’s Blessing)</i> 10:00 – Holy Mass – <i>Mary & Jack Conway (RIP)</i>	

Your continued financial support during these very challenging times would be very much appreciated

Parish priest: Father George Ngwa

email: gngwa@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk Emergency mobile: **07475753040**

Parish office: **01425 614968** ololnewmilton@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Hall Bookings suspended during the Pandemic.

Secretary: Lizzie Davies– Office Hours 12.00h to 15.00h Wednesday & 10.00h to 13.00h Friday

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 FOR THE RENEWAL OF OUR DIOCESE – (to be said at home even with Church closure).
O Sacred Heart of Jesus, we beg you to change us, to convert us and to make us holy. Fill us with a deeper faith, hope and love for you. Send into our hearts the cleansing fire of the Holy Spirit and powerfully renew all the clergy, religious and laity of our Diocese. Unite us in love and respect for one another and unify us as your one, holy people. Grant us a new passion and zeal for the Catholic Faith, for Mission, Outreach and Service. Help us to proclaim your Gospel generously to the poor and needy that many more souls may be saved by finding their way to you in your Church. May Mary Immaculate help us. May St. Edmund of Abingdon and Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati pray for us. Amen

Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel - 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