

OUR LADY OF LOURDES CHURCH In NEW MILTON

Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth

15 Mount Ave, New Milton. BH25 6NT.

Parish priest: *Father George Ngwa*



FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME YEAR "B" 31ST JANUARY 2021

MARRIED LIFE OR BEING SINGLE - WHICH ???

St. Paul surely presents us a dilemma in the complexities of life for our meditation today. The question of a Christian staying single and what the Bible says about Christians who do not go on to marry is often misunderstood. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 7:7-8: "I wish that all men were as I am. But each man has his own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that. Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I am." St. Paul makes it clear that some people have the gift of remaining single and some the gift of married life. Although it seems that nearly everyone marries, it is not necessarily God's will for everyone. Paul, for example, did not have to worry about the extra problems and stresses that come with marriage and/or family. He devoted his entire life to spreading the Word of God. He would not have been such a useful messenger if he had been married.

On the other hand, some people do better as a team, serving God as a couple and a family. These go on to embracing the noble vocation of getting married. Both the married couples and the single individuals are equally important in our society. It is not a sin to remain single, even for your entire life. ***The most important thing in life is not finding a mate and having children, but serving God.*** We should educate ourselves on the Word of God by reading our Bibles and praying. If we ask God to reveal Himself to us, He will as he says in Matthew 7:7; seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened for you, ask and you will receive. Also if we ask Him to use us to fulfil His good works, He will do that as well.

Singleness should not be viewed as a curse or an indication that there is "something wrong" with the single man or woman. While most people marry, and while the Bible seems to indicate that it is God's will for most people to marry, a single Christian is in no sense a "second class" Christian. As 1 Corinthians 7 indicates, singleness is, if anything, a higher calling. As with everything else in life, we should ask God for wisdom concerning marriage. Following God's plan, whether that be marriage or singleness, will result in the productivity and joy that God desires for us.

Therefore is Celibacy a gift or a call ?

Two passages in the New Testament are typically used to discuss what is sometimes called "the gift of celibacy." The first is Matthew 19:9-12, "I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery.' The disciples said to him, 'If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry.' Jesus replied, 'Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given. For some are eunuchs because they were born that way; others were made that way by men; and others have renounced marriage because of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it.'"

The phrase "only those to whom it has been given" refers to people receiving what some call "the gift of celibacy" or better still, ***"the gift of Chastity in the Celibate state."*** Regardless of what we call the gift, Jesus teaches that

most people do not naturally desire to remain single and celibate for a lifetime. The exceptions are those who have “renounced marriage” for the kingdom’s sake. Such celibates have received a special gift from God.

The other pertinent passage is 1 Corinthians 7 which is the second reading in our liturgy today. In this chapter Paul states that it is not wrong to get married, but that it is better if a Christian can stay single. (The reason is that a married man’s attention is “divided” between pleasing the Lord and pleasing his wife; a single man is free to be more focused on the Lord’s work. Paul says, “I wish that all men were [unmarried] as I am. But each man has his own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that” . Paul is careful to state that this is “a concession, not . . . a command”. The ability to stay single and serve God apart from marriage is a gift. Paul and some others had this gift, but not everyone.

The Bible does not explicitly call this “the gift of celibacy,” since celibacy is a vocation; but it does express that the ability to remain unmarried to serve God more fully is a gift. Most adults desire marriage, and this desire is not sinful. In fact, marriage can keep us from sin: “Since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband” (1 Corinthians 7:2). Rather than engage in immorality, it is most advisable for Christians to be married. Sex within marriage between one man and one woman or celibate singleness—these are the only two options for Christians.

Although the Bible does speak of celibacy as a gift and a calling, yet it is not listed with the spiritual gifts as we read in (1 Corinthians 12; and Romans 12). Singleness is a gift that God gives everyone, at least temporarily. For some, the gift of singleness is permanent; for others, God takes that gift away and gives the gift of marriage in its place. The Bible encourages those who are celibate in Christian service that they are an important part of God’s family.

Single Versus Married Life – Pros and Cons

The grass is always greener on the other side. When it comes to the single versus married life, it is difficult to be objective. Each has its pros and cons at different times and they both certainly take a different mindset to enjoy. Married people often wonder what it would be like to be single again, while single people spend countless hours searching for their soul mate. So, which is better? In the end, you will have to decide that for yourself but the lesson here is to enjoy the life you have, while you have it and who you have it with. Things can change in an instant, and sometimes getting what you wish for is not all it’s cracked up to be.

Let’s start with the married side of the single versus married life battle. Marriage definitely has its advantages.

- ✓ There is no more hunting for the perfect date. You get to finally start building something with someone who has made a commitment to you.
- ✓ You can stay home and start enjoying the routine life of knowing what to expect.
- ✓ Gone are the days of pretending that you like certain things or are a certain way (when you aren’t) because your spouse will learn the truth quickly.
- ✓ You also start getting a certain level of respect from other people in this world who seem to see marriage as a rite of passage into adult hood
- ✓ You enjoy two incomes, which can make it a lot easier to get the things you want in life.
- ✓ You will always have someone to wake up to in the morning, to wish you happy birthday and to spend the holidays with.
- ✓ There will be someone there when you get home in a terrible mood and someone that you can take out your frustrations on who won’t hate you for it.
- ✓ Married life often comes with the tradition to having children, with all its cheerfulness especially in old age.
- ✓ Another benefit to married life is the assurance of conjugal love as desired.
- ✓ Having a partner in your life that is a constant (although not perfect) can make you feel stronger and better equipped to tackle this world.

Single people don’t have it so bad either.

You cannot debate married life versus single life without mentioning the one thing that single people have, that married people do not!

- ✓ FREEDOM! Freedom to go and come as they please without having to explain or ask someone else. Freedom to hang out and get drunk if they want to without worrying that someone will get mad.
- ✓ Freedom to buy whatever you want, with no one around to tell you no.
- ✓ Freedom to have a bed to yourself, to not have to listen to someone else snore and freedom to sleep however you want to without sharing the covers.
- ✓ If a single person gets an amazing job offer on the other side of the country – they can jump right on it without consulting the family or asking anyone else how they feel.

The cons of both lifestyles differ from person to person. If you are involved in a bad marriage then single life will seem like a dream come true. Likewise, if you are unable to find someone to spend your time with, then you will likely feel lonely and frightened no matter how successful your life is. The key to weighing the differences is actually in enjoying the lifestyle you have while you have it.

In a good marriage, few people would ever turn back to single hood. In a bad marriage, people crave to be single. When you are single and having the time of your life, imagining being tied so tightly to one other person can feel like an enormous nightmare; yet, if you are single and lonely – having someone to grow old with feels like a breath of fresh air. It seems that it is human nature to always be thinking that the grass on the other side of the fence is always greener. Perhaps that is why it is most important to live life to your standards each moment.

Fr. George Ngwa

ANNOUNCEMENTS

HOLY MASS BOOKING ON LINE DURING CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

As the whole country is now in Lock Down it will still be necessary to restrict the number of parishioners in Church for each Mass to approximately 30, which means that 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.nfwf.org.uk> - (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). Alternatively the Links for all the Sundays in February are:- 7th February 2021 - <https://forms.gle/k8mHFRumgQMNzxs68>
 14th February 2021 - <https://forms.gle/wsmPDFJxnfrfvN3z8> 21st February 2021- <https://forms.gle/yStw6efsp8VpXdlh9>
 28th February 2021 - <https://forms.gle/JAENMABixsHhEcpZ8>

If anybody does not have the facility to book on line, would they please contact Lizzie in the Parish Office on either a Wednesday or Friday between 12:00 noon and 3:00 p.m. Obviously, with the escalation of Covid cases nationally, things might change at any time, so we will try to keep you updated as soon as is possible!

This Sunday, 31st January 2021, is RACIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY There is an optional 2nd Collection for CBCEW to support their advocacy for Racial Justice. If you would like to take part, an on-line fund-raising page has been created to support the collection and can be accessed at - <https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/fundraising/racial-justic-sunday>.

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 – PRC DTR 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.

This Lent, **CAFOD** invites you and the whole Catholic community of England and Wales to join the Big Walk for Water [Join the Big Walk for Water!](#) | [CAFOD](#) virtual event on Saturday 20th February . We are asking everyone to walk in solidarity with those who have to walk to collect water each day like Abdella from Ethiopia. You can walk 5 miles or just around your garden but please walk so that we can make this an event to create awareness of water poverty and to raise funds for those living in poverty around the world.

If you are a keen walker could you Walk for Water as a personal Lenten challenge by walking 10,000 steps a day, every day, for 40 days to raise funds for CAFOD’s Lent appeal. Find out more at <https://cafod.org.uk/Fundraise/Walk-for-Water> Please contact Jo for more information portsmouth@cafod.org.uk 30 seconds walk for water promotion [Walk for Water: Sign up, get fit, change someone’s life](#) | [CAFOD on Vimeo](#)

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME YEAR B 31ST JANUARY 2021

Sunday Vigil	30	2021 Jan.	Vigil Mass of the 4 th Sunday in Ordinary Time Year B	18:00 Holy Mass - <i>For All the Dead Souls in Purgatory</i>	
Sunday	31	Jan.	FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME Year B	08:00 Holy Mass – <i>Private Intention</i> 10:00 Holy Mass - <i>The Harwood Family (Thanksgiving for return to good health)</i>	
Monday	01	Feb.	Monday of the 4 th Week in Ordinary Time Year B		
Tuesday	02	Feb.	THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD Year B	10:00 Holy Mass – <i>Brigid Horan (RIP)</i>	6:00-7:00 p.m. Rosary, Benediction
Wednesday	03	Feb.	St. Blaise Year B	10:00 a.m. Holy Mass – <i>For All Suffering from COVID-19</i>	6:00 – 7:00 p.m. Rosary and Benediction
Thursday	04	Feb.	Thursday of the 4 th Week in Ordinary Time Year B	10:00 a.m. Holy Mass – <i>Joan & Emile Hamon (Wedding Anniversary RIP)</i>	6:00-7:00 p.m. Rosary, Benediction
Friday	05	Feb.	St. Agatha Year B	10:00 Holy Mass – <i>Bernard Delair (RIP)</i>	6:00 – 7:00 p.m. Rosary and Benediction
Saturday	06	Feb.	St, Paul Miki & Companions Year B	10:00 Holy Mass - <i>For Healing from Disease</i>	
Saturday Vigil			Vigil Mass of the 5 th Sunday in Ordinary Time Year “B”	18:00 Holy Mass –	
Sunday	07	Feb.	FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME YEAR B	8:00 - Holy Mass – <i>Fr. G. Vervenne (Birthday Intention)</i> 10:00 – Holy Mass - <i>Living Rosary</i>	

This Weekend: 2nd Collection (optional) for Racial Justice

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

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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