

# 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 OF EASTER YEAR "B" 25<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2021**

## **JESUS THE ETERNAL GOOD SHEPHERD**

Today is known as GOOD SHEPHERD SUNDAY because, in each year of the liturgical cycle on this 4th Sunday, the Gospel is always taken from the 10th chapter of John where Jesus speaks of himself as the "good shepherd". In today's Gospel reading, Jesus emphasises the self-sacrificing element in his own life: "The good shepherd is one who lays down his life for his sheep." He contrasts the good shepherd who owns the sheep to someone who is simply hired to look after them. The hired man thinks primarily of his own welfare and, if he sees a wolf coming, he takes off, leaving the sheep to be attacked and scattered in fear and terror. Jesus, on the other hand, will not be like a hired person: "I lay down my life for my sheep." Perhaps he contrasts himself with those mercenary religious leaders among his own people and found in every religious grouping in the world today, who do just what is expected of them but have no real commitment or sense of responsibility to those in their charge.

***He knows his sheep:*** Secondly, the good shepherd knows his sheep and they know him. There is a mutual bond of love and intimacy. That love is compared to the deep mutual relationship that exists between Jesus and his Father. "My own know me just as the Father knows me." Again the hired man or the self-interested leader will not have such a relationship with his charges. The Second Reading speaks in similar terms when the author says, "Think of the love that the Father has lavished on us, by letting us be called God's children, and that is what we are."

***One shepherd and one flock:*** Thirdly, the good shepherd deeply desires that many other sheep should come to identify themselves with him. "There are other sheep I have that are not of this fold, and these I have to lead as well." The ultimate goal is that "there will be only one flock, and one shepherd", that the whole world will be united together with its God and Lord. This is the meaning of the Kingdom which is at the heart of the Gospel message. This is a goal which preoccupies us still today. There are still so many millions of people who have not yet heard the message of a loving God, a God who sent his only Son to die for them. They seek meaning and happiness in their lives by pursuing all kinds of other goals which inevitably turn to ashes: material abundance, status in the eyes of others, power over others, mistaking pleasure and hedonism for happiness... In so doing, they reject Jesus the Good Shepherd. "Because the world refused to acknowledge him, therefore it does not acknowledge us." This is something we must learn to accept as a fact, even if it is hard to understand and even harder to take. No matter how closely we follow in the footsteps of our Shepherd, in fact, the more closely we follow him, the more likely it is that we will be rejected and even attacked. More tragic still, however, there are so many people who claim Christ as Lord, many of them very good and sincere people, who are often divided, even bitterly divided among themselves. Here, more than anywhere is there a need for all to follow one Shepherd and form one flock. Otherwise how can we give witness to the love of Christ if that love is lacking among the servants of Jesus?

Lastly, there are those who, though incorporated through baptism into the Body of Christ, consistently behave in a way which totally distorts people's understanding of Christ and his call to discipleship, fulfilment and happiness. Probably, most of us have at one time or another failed in our call to give witness to the truth and love that is to be found in Christ.

***Giving life willingly:*** Jesus emphasises that, in giving his life for his sheep, he is doing so of his own will. It is not just by force of circumstances. His death is to be the living proof that "the greatest love a person can show is to give one's life for one's friends". This is the proof that Jesus truly is a Good Shepherd. On the face of it and looked at with purely secular eyes, the life and mission of Jesus seemed an utter failure. Even Jesus' friends and admirers must have shaken their heads in sorrow as they saw him die on the cross. Jesus himself said "It is finished." But, for him, the words had a completely different meaning. As Peter tells the assembled Jews in the Temple in today's First Reading, "This is the stone rejected by you the builders, but which has proved to be the keystone. For of all the names in the world given to men, this is the only one by which we can be saved." As Jesus himself says in the Gospel today, "I lay down my life of my own free will, and as it is in my power to lay it down, so it is in my power to take it up again." And so it was.

***Vocation:*** Lastly, all of this is intimately linked with the second theme of this Sunday. Not only is it Good Shepherd Sunday, it is also "Vocations Sunday". On this day we are especially asked first of all to pray that the Church may be provided with the leaders needed to do its work of spreading the Gospel. We know that at the present time there is a critical shortage of such leaders, at least in the traditional sense – priests and religious. But, while we may earnestly pray that our Church be supplied with the leaders it needs, there can be a tendency among us to pray that OTHERS may answer that call. We do not see ourselves as included. We may pray earnestly for more young people to offer themselves as priests and religious but clearly exclude our own children. But the problem is a wider one. We have for too long given a much too narrow meaning to the word 'vocation'. We tend to limit it to a calling to be a priest or a member of a religious institute. But, in fact, every single one of us has a vocation. For most of us, probably, it is what we are now doing be it as spouses, parents, teachers, doctors, civil servants, running a business, salespersons... or whatever. Nevertheless, each one of us should be asking ourselves today: Is what I am spending my energies on every day my real vocation? Is this what God wants me to be doing with my life? How is what I am doing giving witness to my Christian faith? What contribution am I offering to making this world a better place for people to live in? To what extent am I a spreader of truth, of love, of justice, of freedom, of tolerance and acceptance...? And, if I am in a position which would be difficult to change (as a spouse or parent or holding a particular job), how, within that situation, is God calling me to greater service of my Church and my community? Am I giving something through my life or am I just using society (and even the Church) to get what I want? God is calling every single one of us to work for the Gospel. For a small number it may be as a priest or religious – and that call can come at any time in one's life. But there are hundreds of other ways of serving the Church and helping to build up the Christian community. Where is God calling me to make my own unique contribution based on the particular talents God has given me? If every single one of us were to answer that question sincerely and to act upon it, I am confident that our Church would have all the leadership it needs.

***Gleaned from the spiritual writings of [Good Shepherd Sunday/Vocation Sunday]***

**Fr. George Ngwa**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

## **HOLY MASS BOOKING ON LINE DURING CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC**

It is still necessary to continue restricting the number of parishioners in Church for each Mass to approximately 45 + (depending on bubbles), 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.nfwp.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 Masses for Sundays in May are as follows:

Sunday 2nd May 2021 - <https://forms.gle/dY661FwHrPHyKkJB9>

Sunday 9th May 2021 - <https://forms.gle/5TedCepYmhTMaChi8>

Sunday 16th May 2021 - <https://forms.gle/Vauz5PVSsmyPX296>

Sunday 23rd May 2021 - <https://forms.gle/iSYL4GtcADVPw7rB8>

Sunday 30th May 2021 - <https://forms.gle/AR5d3oL3iS2Pq1hV8>

**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 Our Lady. 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.

**NEW FOREST BASIC BANK (NFBB)** I have just learned that there is an additional facility for ALL MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY to shop at Fairshare’s Mobile Larder. They have two locations ONE at the Ashley Hub New Milton, Ashley Baptist Church, 3 Lower Ashley Road BH25 5AA which opens from 9.30-11.30 Every Tuesday. The SECOND is at St Mark’s Community Hall, The Square Pennington SO41 8EJ which opens every Thursday from 1.00 pm-2.30 pm. Membership is required to use this facility. The cost is £2.50 for 10 products per week for a single person household up to £5.00 per week for 25 products for a four person household. To take advantage of this facility you just turn up on the day(s) which may be of interest to you. Further information can be obtained from the NFBB or myself. **Katherine Dempster**

**CAFOD** Thank you for your generous donations to CAFOD’s Family Fast Day during Lent. We featured Marian and her son Svondo in Zimbabwe in Lent 2018. The community vegetable garden that your donations helped provide is growing well and during the pandemic the family has survived on the vegetables. Your support has also helped to provide soap and handwashing stations in the garden and in family homes. This is just one of many long-term development projects that CAFOD has funded with the money from that Fast Day. Thank you for your steadfast support. Jo Lewry, Community Participation Coordinator CAFOD Portsmouth

**SAFEGUARDING MINISTER** It is with great pleasure that we can announce that Jill Parsons has very kindly agreed to take on the role of Safeguarding Minister, taking over from Tony Harwood. This is an extremely important role and we would like to take this opportunity of thanking Tony for all his dedication during his time as Safeguarding Minister and welcoming Jill to her new role. It is hoped that we will all give her as much support as possible whilst she is training up into the job. Thank you Jill!

**CALLING ON A GOOD SAMARITAN** Mrs Margaret Grant is a long-standing member of Our Lady of Lourdes but more recently she has been unable to drive and is now in a care home in Sway. She was very involved with the Church, both as a reader and helping transport members of the congregation to Mass. She would dearly like to attend 10:00 a.m. Mass on Sundays. Is there anyone who either lives towards Sway or who would be prepared to help this lady get to Mass on a Sunday? If so, would you be kind enough to contact Lizzie in the Parish Office.

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

**FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER YEAR B 25<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2021**

Sunday Vigil	24	2021 Apr.	Vigil Mass of the 4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter Year B	18:00 Holy Mass - <i>John Williams (RIP)</i>	
Sunday	25	Apr.	FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER Year B	08:00 Holy Mass – <i>Edoardo Crisante (RIP)</i>  10:00 Holy Mass – <i>Rosalynne Carter (for health &amp; wellbeing)</i>	
Monday	26	Apr.	Monday of the 4 <sup>th</sup> Week of Easter Year B		
Tuesday	27	Apr.	Tuesday of the 4 <sup>th</sup> Week of Easter Year B	18:00 Exposition 18:30 Rosary 18:50 Benediction 19:00 Holy Mass – <i>Svetlana Martinovic (Birthday Blessings)</i>	6:00-7:00 p.m. Rosary, Benediction
Wednesday	28	Apr.	Wednesday of the 4 <sup>th</sup> Week of Easter Year B	10:00 a.m. Holy Mass – <i>John (Jack) Evans (Intention)</i>	6:00-7:00 p.m. Rosary and Benediction
Thursday	29	Apr.	St. CATHERINE of SIENA Year B	10:00 a.m. Holy Mass - <i>Joseph Martinovic (RIP)</i>	6:00-7:00 p.m. Rosary and Benediction
Friday	30	Apr.	Friday of the 4 <sup>th</sup> Week of Easter Year B	10:00 Holy Mass – <i>Mary Edna Talbot (RIP)</i>	6:00 – 7:00 p.m. Rosary and Benediction
Saturday	01	May	Saturday of the 4 <sup>th</sup> Week of Easter Year B	10:00 Holy Mass - <i>Daisy (Joan) Jenkins (Intention)</i>	Divine Mercy Devotion 9:30 a.m.
Saturday Vigil			Vigil Mass of the 5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter Year B	18:00 Holy Mass – <i>Prince Philip (for the repose of his soul)</i>	
Sunday	02	May	FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER YEAR B	08:00 - Holy Mass – <i>IreneNeh &amp; Jute Ngwa (RIP)</i>  10:00 – Holy Mass– <i>Mary &amp; Jack Conway (RIP)</i>	

This weekend – 24<sup>th</sup>/25<sup>th</sup> April – 2<sup>nd</sup> Collection (Obligatory) for Clergy Training Fund

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

**Parish priest: Father George Ngwa**

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

Parish office: 01425 614968 [lolnewmilton@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:lolnewmilton@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk)

Hall Bookings suspended during the Pandemic.

**Secretary: Lizzie Davies**– Office Hours 12.00h to 15.00h Wednesdays & Fridays

Our Parish Live Streaming: <http://churchservices.tv/newmilton> Website: [www.nfwp.org.uk](http://www.nfwp.org.uk)

**Safeguarding Minister: Jill Parsons to be appointed**

**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**