

OUR LADY OF LOURDES CHURCH In NEW MILTON

Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth

15 Mount Ave, New Milton. BH25 6NT.

Parish priest: *Father George Ngwa*



SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER YEAR "B" 9TH MAY 2021

“Love one another as I have loved you.”

Today the Sixth Sunday of Easter, we are invited to reflect how to love God and love one another. Jesus gives new meaning to God’s commandments, based on true love.

Loving and Dying - Rita was dying of a disease from which her nine-year old brother, Richard, had just recovered. The surgeon said to Richard, “Only a transfusion of your blood will save your sister. Are you ready to give her your blood?” Richard was terrified but finally said, “OK, Doctor!” After the transfusion, Richard asked quietly, “Doctor, when will I die?” it was only then that the doctor understood Richard’s fear: he thought that by giving his blood he would die for Rita. Is our love a ready-to-die love?

The word ‘love’ is so widely used and abused. I love Jesus. I love my girlfriend. I love my dog. I love chocolates. I love holidays. The same word love is used for God, persons, animals, things, events, etc. Moreover; and novels equate love with sex and talk about “making love” as if it could be manufactured and marketed. How do you understand ‘love’? Today’s second reading and the Gospel use the word ‘love’ almost twenty times.

Deus Caritas Est, the first encyclical of Pope Benedict, begins with the words of today’s second reading, “God is love” and goes on to explain what love entails. Indeed, all human love springs from a foundational fact, “God is love.” Mind you, this line appears only once in the Bible, but, it is the core which gives the whole Bible its deepest meaning. Having asserted that God is love, Scripture tells us that we are God’s children since we are “created in God’s image and likeness” (Gen 1:26), and the greatest example of true love is set by God’s Son Jesus. He washes his disciples’ feet before exhorting us to “love one another as I have loved you.” Jesus then proceeds to symbolically break bread and sacrifices his life at Calvary out of love for us. Christian love, therefore, is about bending down, washing feet, serving people, breaking body, shedding ‘one’s own blood: a selfless ready-to-die love.

Since the gospel of Judas has made Gnosticism famous, we note that, for Gnostics, the truth was “to know” God. in other words, to love God meant to have an intellectual grasp of God. In stark contrast, for Jesus, “to know” is not enough; one must ‘do’! “You are my friends if you do what I command you!” Indeed, Christian love is neither a consoling sentiment nor an ideology for speculation – it is a sacred covenant, a commitment to love in deed. Let us all pray asking God to make our Love fruitful in his service. Ultimately, love is readiness to die for another. Christian love is never exclusive. A true Christian seeks to expand the horizons of her or his love by loving more and more people deeply. The first reading tells us “the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles.” Gentiles were regarded as ‘outsiders’. But, not for Jesus. Thus, the more one can love others ‘outside one’s circle’, the more is one Christ-like.

Little Richard was ready to die for Rita. And, many mothers daily sacrifice so much so that their children might live fully. But what about our larger family, the Church and the world? True love is dangerous.

Love is not synonymous with pleasure. But, true love brings boundless joy. Jesus said, “These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.” “The saints are drunk with love, their thirst is for love.” Do I have this Christ-like thirst for love? With this thirst, I will certainly experience true joy. Even in death.

Love makes us equal to each other

Also in the readings today we are reminded of *our great dignity and of the way we are to act in accordance with that dignity*. Jesus tells us in the Gospel: we are no longer slaves, but friends. This is quite a promotion! What is even more remarkable is that it was completely undeserved. Normally friendship is two people seeking the good of one another. In this case I do not think we can claim humanity was seeking the good of the Lord. Of course, God was always seeking our good.

To be friends is to be equals. We may not be equals in social status, as when Jonathon befriended David. Jonathon was the heir to the throne and David was a shepherd brought into the royal court. The Israelites, and David himself, understood the two were not on equal footing in society, but as friends they were relationally equal. In our situation being a friend of Jesus does not make us His equal in standing, but His words tell us how He sees us and, consequently, how He treats us. In both the Gospel and the second reading we are instructed regarding the nature of love. Relationally, the foundation of love is a fundamental similarity, an equality of sorts. From that foundation the relationship of love must be a reciprocal benevolence which, when two people are seeking the good of the other, results in a communion of persons.

For Jesus to call us friends, He either had to come down to our level or raise us up to His level. Our Lord spoke these words prior to His Passion, so the Apostles had not been raised up to our Lord’s level, but He had taken our humanity to Himself and united Himself with us on our human level. However, Jesus had taken our humanity to Himself which allowed us to love Him in a human way and on a human level.

In the Gospel our Lord tells us that no one has greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. This is the greatest love because it is clearly selfless, seeking only the good of the other. Obviously, there is nothing in it for the one who is offering his life for the other. Having taken our human nature to Himself, Jesus had the capacity to die and, thereby, to love us in the most profoundly human way possible. It is also possible for us to love Him in a similar fashion because this love is on the human level and is, therefore, within our ability.

However, as beautiful as our Lord’s love is and as astounding as it is that we can love Him as His friend in a human manner, He has gone even further. In the first reading we hear about the baptism of the Gentiles. Being baptized we have become children of God. In other words, Jesus came to our human level so we could become His friends, but now He has raised us up to His divine level. We are not only friends, we are members of Jesus Christ and children of God. Before we were baptized being the Lord’s friend was as high as we could go (and even this was beyond anything we could ask for or imagine!). But through baptism we have been raised to a divine level of acting and being.

This means we have the capacity to love in a divine manner. When we look at our Lord’s love for us it is hard to accept how anyone could love us so much that He would die for us, and yet that was loving us on the human level. On the divine level, He continues to love us, not only by dying for us, but by giving us a share in His own life. His life is the divine life. So as members of Jesus Christ and children of God who participate in the divine nature and in the divine life. This means we also participate in the divine love.

This divine life and love are seen in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit given to us at baptism, but also in the Holy Eucharist where Jesus continues to give Himself to us. In the sacrifice of the Mass He continues to die for us and in Holy Communion He communicates His life to us. Being both human and divine, He loves us on both levels; being human and participating in the divine nature, we are to love Him on both levels.

Our Lord tells us we will remain in His love if we keep His commandments just as He kept the Father's commandments. His commandment is to love, so on both levels, human and divine, we are to love and to be loved!

Fr. George Ngwa

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHURCH RE-OPENING With a significant drop in Covid cases in the U.K. and with the easing of restrictions, it is with joy that we can announce that the Church will be open for all Masses as from 1st May. However, it will still be 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 for Sunday Masses only at the moment. 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 16th May 2021 - <https://forms.gle/Vauz5PVSsmyPX296>

Sunday 23rd May 2021 - <https://forms.gle/jSYL4GtcADVPw7rB8>

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 – PRCDTR 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.

INTENTIONS – If you would like a Mass Intention said in memory of a loved one or to celebrate a special occasion, please complete a Mass Intention Envelope and hand it to Lizzie in the Parish Office or post through the Presbytery letterbox. Please ensure that you write clearly your name and the name of whom the intention is for; we will try to accommodate your preferred date! Your intentions can be paid for by cash, by cheque made payable to PRCDTR New Milton or via internet banking at Lloyds Bank – Sort Code 30-93-04 Account Number 00883116. Please make sure, if using internet banking or cheque, that the name and date of the intention are clearly marked as a reference. Payment at time of booking a Mass would be much appreciated – thank you!

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!

NEW FOREST BASIC BANK - Please remember those less fortunate than yourselves and continue supporting this very worthy cause. Tins and dried foods such as rice, pasta, couscous etc. are always very welcome. Thank you!

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.

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER YEAR B 2ND MAY 2021

Sunday Vigil	08	2021 May	Vigil Mass of the 6 th Sunday of Easter Year B	18:00 Holy Mass - <i>John Williams (RIP)</i>	
Sunday	09	May	SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER Year B	08:00 Holy Mass – <i>Paul Gordelier & Family (for health & wellbeing)</i> 10:00 Holy Mass – <i>John Hamon (Birthday Blessings)</i>	
Monday	10	May	Monday of the 6 th Week of Easter Year B		
Tuesday	11	May	Tuesday of the 6 th Week of Easter Year B	18:00 Exposition 18:30 Rosary 18:50 Benediction 19:00 Holy Mass – <i>Mary Fildew (RIP)</i>	6:00-7:00 p.m. Rosary, Benediction
Wednesday	12	May	St. Pancras Year B	10:00 a.m. Holy Mass – <i>John Williams (Birthday Anniversary – RIP)</i>	6:00-7:00 p.m. Rosary and Benediction
			Vigil Mass of The Ascension of the Lord	18:00 Holy Mass – <i>Catherine d’Espagnac (health & wellbeing)</i>	
Thursday	13	May	THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD Year B	10:00 a.m. Holy Mass - <i>Achyemma Xavionn (2nd Anniversary RIP)</i>	6:00-7:00 p.m. Rosary and Benediction
Friday	14	May	ST. MATTHIAS Year B	10:00 Holy Mass – <i>Canon William Isaac (RIP)</i>	6:00 – 7:00 p.m. Rosary and Benediction
Saturday	15	May	Saturday of the 6 th Week of Easter after Ascension Year B	10:00 Holy Mass - <i>Mitch Bruce (RIP)</i>	Divine Mercy Devotion 9:30 a.m.
Saturday Vigil			Vigil Mass of the 7 th Sunday of Easter Year B	18:00 Holy Mass – <i>Andrew Doolan (RIP)</i>	
Sunday	16	May	SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER YEAR B	08:00 - Holy Mass – <i>The Churcher Family (God’s Blessing for health & wellbeing)</i> 10:00 – Holy Mass– <i>Ian Russell (RIP)</i>	

Weekend of 15th/16th May – 2nd Collection (Obligatory) for Catholic Communications Network

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

Parish priest: Father George Ngwa

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Parish office: 01425 614968 ololnewmilton@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.nfwf.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