

# OUR LADY OF LOURDES CHURCH In NEW MILTON

Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth

15 Mount Ave, New Milton. BH25 6NT.

Parish priest: *Father George Ngwa*



**SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER YEAR "B" 16<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2021**

## *Father, may they be one as we are one*

On this last Sunday of Easter, we are invited to listen in as Jesus makes a “High Priestly Prayer” to his Father. The setting for his prayer is the Upper Room on Maundy Thursday, and the mood in the room as Jesus talks to God is heavy and poignant. After all He has just said goodbye to his disciples, and every word, deed, and gesture he has offered them is weighted with grief. He has washed their feet, fed them bread and wine, promised them the Holy Spirit, and commanded them to love one another. He has spoken to them with both tenderness and urgency, as if time is running out, and indeed it is.

Now, in the last moments before his arrest, he looks up to heaven and speaks of his heart’s deepest desires to God. Jesus is praying, and he is praying to his Father. and our Father. He prays for us, and he asks our Father that we would all become *one as he and the Father are one*.

If Jesus is praying for our oneness, then he is also recognizing and rejecting the boundaries and differences that divide us. There are divisions within ourselves, our families, our neighbours, our churches, our nation. We live in a world full of divisions – male or female; rich or poor; gay or straight; Protestant or Catholic; north or south; conservative or liberal; educated or uneducated; young or old; rich nations and poor nations; developed and underdeveloped worlds; heaven or earth; divine or human; sinner or saved; orthodox or heretic. I am sure you could all list many more divisions in our world than the ones I’ve just mentioned. We could probably go on and on listing the boundaries that we encounter, and all too often establish or promote. They are not just divisions though, as they have become oppositions. These divisions exist not only out there in the world, but primarily and firstly in the human heart. We project onto the world our fragmented lives.

For every boundary we establish, there is a human being. Ultimately I suggest, boundaries and differences are not about issues. They are about real people, who have names, lives, joys, sorrows, concerns, and needs just like us and I think we sometimes forget or ignore this. It is often easier to deal with an issue than a real person. Whether or not we admit it, the boundaries we establish and enforce are usually done in such a way as to favour us; to make us feel okay, to reassure us that we are right and in control, chosen and desired, seen and recognized, approved of and accepted. In order for me to win, someone must lose, in order for me to be included, someone must be excluded otherwise winning and being included mean nothing. The divisions of our lives in some way become self-perpetuating.

We often deal with the boundaries and differences that divide us by writing agreements, covenants, treaties, and legislation that govern how we will get along with each other and behave in the midst of our differences towards each other. But that is not Jesus’ prayer. His prayer is “...so that they may be one, as we are one”,

Jesus does not pray for our tolerance, our getting along, or just being nice to each other. He does not even pray that our differences would be eliminated. Instead he prays for our oneness. He prays that we would be one as he and the Father are one so that our oneness would be the revelation of God’s presence to the world. Oneness in the midst of difference becomes a sacramental presence of God’s life in the world.

That does not mean, however, that we lose our identity or individuality. Jesus does not stop being Jesus and the Father stop being the Father because they are one. Oneness is less about numbers and quantity but more about qualitative. Jesus and the Father are one because they love and give themselves to each other. Oneness is a quality of life – God’s life. Jesus’ prayer for oneness is ultimately that we would be and live like God.

Oneness is not about eliminating differences. It is about love. Love is the only thing that can ever overcome division and over and over again, Jesus tells us that in his teachings.

- Love God.
- Love your neighbour.
- Love yourself.
- Love your enemy.

Our love for God, neighbour, self, and enemy reveals our oneness. And the measure of our oneness, our God-likeness, is love. In love there may be differences, but there is no division or boundary.

God’s love knows no boundaries. God loves male and female, rich and poor, gay and straight, north and south. God loves Protestant and Catholic, conservative and liberal, educated and uneducated. God loves young and old, heaven and earth, divine and human. God loves sinner and saved, orthodox and heretic. All are loved fully, completely, and uniquely as each one needs. God does not even draw boundaries between Jesus and us. If we think God loves Jesus more than anyone else, we have missed the point of the Gospel. God loves you the same as he loves Jesus. God loves your neighbour the same as he loves Jesus. God loves your enemy the same as he loves Jesus. If that is how God loves, how can we do anything less and still call ourselves Christians?

For far too long we have dealt with each other through our boundaries, differences, and divisions. And you can see the situations that has got us into. You need only look at the world, read the newspaper, or watch the news to see it. When we deal with others through our divisions we label, we judge and exclude, we can end up resorting to war and violence, and then take shelter to defend our position. There is no oneness in that.

Although Jesus is praying to the Father, you and I will in the large part, be the ones to answer Jesus’ prayer. That is because we answer his prayer every time we choose how to love, who to love, where to love. It is now time to really answer Jesus’ prayer and deal with one another in love. So, in these coming days, I wonder who are the boundaries, what are the divisions that await our love?

In the Gospel reading, we hear Jesus praying fervently with all his heart, mind, & strength to God the Father. Jesus’ prayer is utterly confident...confident in his life, ministry, and faith, confident in God the Father’s love, fidelity and liveliness, confident in his own disciples — those first disciples, and we disciples who are gathered here today.

Listen again to Jesus’ words about us...

***I pray that my joy may be made complete in them.***

***The glory you have given me, I have given them.***

***The love I shared with you is in them.***

Jesus is completely confident that we are expressions of God’s glory and that our lives bring both God & ourselves joy.

Jesus is completely confident in God the father & in us, his disciple friends, even on the night that begins Jesus’ greatest suffering...

even on the day that Jesus leaves his first disciples to ascend to his Father.

Jesus is confident that we can participate in and share God’s glory, God’s power to “restore, support, strengthen, and establish” what is good and true, compassionate and free; both in celebratory times, as

well as through the times when the Good News of God's glory is hard to see and do. When our own confidence to encounter God's love and redemption wavers, the Christian community – our human community often provides a way for us to come closer to him.

**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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 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 – 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.

**SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER YEAR B 16 MAY 2021**

Sunday Vigil	15	2021 May	Vigil Mass of the 7 <sup>th</sup> 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 (for health &amp; wellbeing)</i> 10:00 Holy Mass – <i>Ian Russell (RIP)</i>	
Monday	17	May	Monday of the 7 <sup>th</sup> Week of Easter Year B		
Tuesday	18	May	St. John 1 Year B	18:00 Exposition 18:30 Rosary 18:50 Benediction 19:00 Holy Mass	6:00-7:00 p.m. Rosary, Benediction
Wednesday	19	May	DEDICATION OF THE CATHEDRAL OF ST JOHN, PORTSMOUTH	10:00 a.m. Holy Mass – <i>Susan Harries (3<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary RIP)</i>	6:00-7:00 p.m. Rosary and Benediction
Thursday	20	May	St. Bernardine of Siena Year B	10:00 a.m. Holy Mass - <i>Friends who have passed away Alan Cherian, Arya Joseph &amp; Others (RIP)</i>	6:00-7:00 p.m. Rosary and Benediction
Friday	21	May	St. Christopher Magallanes & Companions Year B	10:00 Holy Mass – <i>In thanksgiving to B.V.M. for hood health &amp; blessings)</i>	6:00 – 7:00 p.m. Rosary and Benediction
Saturday	22	May	St. Rita of Cascia Year B	10:00 Holy Mass - <i>Simon Thorpe (recovery to good health)</i>	Divine Mercy Devotion 9:30 a.m.
Saturday Vigil			Vigil Mass of Pentecost Year B	18:00 Holy Mass – <i>Brigid Horan (RIP)</i>	
Sunday	23	May	PENTECOST SUNDAY YEAR B	08:00 - Holy Mass – <i>People who have passed away from our Congregation</i> 10:00 – Holy Mass– <i>Lissamma (Birthday Blessings)</i>	

Weekend of 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> May – 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 [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