



## PARISH NEWS FOR THE CATHOLIC PARISH OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, ANDOVER

### NORTH WEST HAMPSHIRE PASTORAL AREA

St John the Baptist, Andover and St John Fisher, Whitchurch

**Office:** Alexandra Rd, Andover, SP10 3AD Tel: 01264 352829

**Father Austin email:** agurr@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

**Office email:** stjtb@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk **Website:** www.catholic-andover.org.uk

**Parish Safeguarding Officer:** Mrs Jackie Kelly: cp\_stjohntb@btinternet.com

**Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday: 9.00am - 3.00pm. NB: CLOSED on Wed.**

**12th and 13th September - Twenty-Fourth Sunday of Ordinary Time**

#### THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK.

The readings of this twenty fourth Sunday present us with a rational aspect to forgiveness. Rationalism in Christianity is often regarded as lack of faith, but Jesus Christ, a balanced personality, combined in himself the emotional and the rational. In the readings it is clear that *the miracle of God's mercy* is enough motivation to forgive others. The miracle of mercy once received is binding. We owe others forgiveness, having been forgiven ourselves.

The first reading from the book of Ecclesiasticus, reveal the reciprocal nature of forgiveness. *Forgive your neighbour the hurt he does you, and when you pray, your sins will be forgiven.* This rational approach reveal the secrets to God's heart. The dual effect is even more enticing- peace with God and fellow human. The onus lies in our hands to make our prayers heard. We should emphasize the importance of Jesus Christ's mission to bring peace to the world. Forgiveness is the non-violent road that leads to peace.

The second reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans present the principle of God's Mercy – *alive or dead we belong to the Lord.* This is the principle behind God's mercy. He accepts us without condition. The character of forgiveness is **unconditional**. St. Paul reminds us in another section of his letter to the Romans that *while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.* (Romans 5:8). On this unconditional love stands the miracle of God's mercy. It is irrational not to connect with this understanding. Peace cannot be achieved with violence. Forgiveness is the greatest form of peace.

The gospel according to Matthew, brings to us the drama of forgiveness. The drama expresses the enormity of God's mercy. And it shows that the human lack of understanding of this enormity is oftentimes responsible for the inability to forgive.

According to the gospel story, the Master asked the servant: *I cancelled all that debt of yours when you appealed to me. Were you not bound, then, to have pity on your fellow servant just as I had pity on you?* The miracle of God's mercy speaks to the heart and is able to compel it to comply. According to this gospel, it is a sign of wickedness to break the chain of forgiveness. God intends it to be a binding chain on all mankind.

Our prayer is that God enables in us the wisdom to understand the enormity of His mercy in order to motivate forgiveness in us. If nothing else, we almost always feel better when we try to forgive and forget rather than cherishing grudges. We know that God is merciful and understands our struggles so we're not doing this unassisted.

A.E./E.W.

#### **DIOCESAN PRAYER INTENTIONS: 13TH SEPTEMBER - 19TH SEPTEMBER**

These are arranged so that in the course of a year we pray for each parish of our Diocese and the Catholic organisations within it. **Sunday:** *Staff and pupils, governors, parents and chaplains in our Primary and Secondary Schools.*

**Monday:** *Community of Holy Cross, Seaview.*

**Tuesday:** *Community of St Patrick, Sandown.*

**Wednesday:** *Sisters of Our Lady of Pity.*

**Thursday:** *Franciscans in the Diocese; Secular Franciscan Order; Society of Franciscan Pilgrims.*

**Friday:** *Diocesan Department for Academies and Schools.*

**Saturday:** *Parish of St Thomas of Canterbury, Newport.*

#### **FIRST HOLY COMMUNION 2020**

*Congratulations to all the children who are making their First Holy Communion both this Saturday and next Saturday.*

*Please remember them in your prayers. We pray for . . .*

Leopold; Ava; Emily; Oskar G; Takondwa; Patrick; Annabelle; Olivia; Catherine; Dominika; Sophia; Geoffrey; Kamila; Bobby; Zara; Jakub; Anna; Bettina; Idony; Evelyn; Philip; Joseph ; Sebastian; Lawrence; Hannah-Jo; Francis; Nicolas; Leo; Reuben; Oskar A; Agata; Denis; Julia B; Martyna ; Isaac; Nicole; Alan ; Sofia; Ralph; Wictor; Nicholas; Mikolaj; Isabelle; Oliver; Lolita; Nicola R; Julia S; Michal ; Szymon; Gabriel; Olivia S; Nicola M; Ixia; Aiden; Ethan; Amelia; Kazia and Zuzanna.



**PASTORAL LETTER FROM THE BISHOP**  
**to all Baptised Catholics in the Diocese of Portsmouth**  
**on 13th September 2020, the Twenty-Fourth Sunday of the Year**  
**'COME BACK TO ME' SAYS THE LORD**

Dear Friends,

I am writing to everyone in our Diocese of Portsmouth, to every baptised Catholic, to all the clergy, religious and lay faithful, and to all members of our parishes, schools and communities. I write too to everyone of good will, to those 'with ears to hear', to anyone searching for God, and to all who wish to meet His Son, Jesus Christ and to know more about His Gospel. I say to you all: Come back! Come back to Mass! Come back to church for private prayer! Come back to visit Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament! You are truly welcome - we have missed you!

These last months have been extraordinary. The pandemic has caused great harm, physical, mental, emotional and financial. Sadly, many have fallen sick and some have lost their lives. At the same time, medical staff and key workers have responded with remarkable generosity and courage. Across our Diocese, parishes and schools, clergy and faithful have been highly creative. Priests have done all they can to serve their parishioners: live-streaming Masses, hearing Confessions in gardens, keeping in touch by email, phone and Zoom meetings. Parishioners have generously continued their financial support. Hospital chaplains have selflessly served the dying, ensuring they receive the Last Sacraments, Absolution and the Apostolic Pardon. Schools have sent out food parcels to the housebound. Our diocesan Caritas has adapted their projects to continue supporting the needy, whilst the work of CAFOD has been flourishing.

Now that schools and many others are returning to work, let us keep up this good work. Let us keep safe. And let us ask the Lord for an end to the pandemic, the invention of a vaccine and the restoration of ordinary life.

In inviting you back to Mass, I am aware that in some places and for some of you - those self-shielding, the sick, the vulnerable - this will not yet be possible. Moreover, we are aware too that the infection-rate is varying, and we might even face a local lockdown. Indeed, for everyone it will require care, prudence and adjustments. It might mean attending Mass on a weekday instead of a Sunday. But as we enter the autumn and our schools return, rather than focusing on what we cannot do, let us focus on what we can, so that the great mission of our Diocese of Portsmouth can go forward: Bringing People Closer to Jesus Christ through His Church.

Most of our churches are now open, with very stringent safety procedures in place. I thank our clergy and parishioners for their massive efforts. If you can, please do volunteer your time, help and support so we can keep up this good work. The pandemic has shown us how fragile modern life is. It has caused us to review our priorities. It has made us face our mortality and the question of God. For weeks, by government mandate, our churches were closed and the public celebration of the Liturgy suspended. I know that many felt hurt by this. As human beings we have not only bodily needs but spiritual needs too.

Moreover, it is in our churches that the Lord sanctifies, teaches and guides us, uniting us together, giving us the Sacraments of eternal life, and sending us out on mission and service. Many followed Mass online and spoke of their hunger and thirst for God. Online has its place and we thank God for all the work done to enable this. But online is not the same as 'inline' and being there. It's not the same as actually receiving Jesus in Holy Communion. It's not the same as participating in the presence of the eucharistic community.

This is why I say: Come back to the Lord to be nourished by His Word and His Sacraments! True, the canonical obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and holy days is still suspended. But what about the Lord Who calls to us in our hearts: "The sheep that belong to me listen to my voice: I know them and they follow me" (John 10: 27)? What about His promise: "Anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me and I in him" (John 6: 56)? What about His invitation: "Come follow me" (Mark 1: 17)? His offer: "I have come that they may have life and have it to the full" (John 10: 10)? Surely, we do not follow Jesus our Lord and Master simply out of habit or duty? No, we follow Him because we love Him. We follow Him because He has called us. We follow Him because He is our Saviour: He has laid down His life for us.

May our diocesan patrons Mary Immaculate, St. Edmund and Bl. Pier Giorgio, pray for you and protect you. May they obtain for you freedom from fear. May they inspire in you a generous response to the Lord's call.

Thank you for reading - and please be assured of my prayers.

In Corde Iesu,

+ *Philip*

Bishop of Portsmouth

### **FIRST HOLY COMMUNION 2020 - 2021**

#### **INFORMATION FOR THOSE WHOSE CHILDREN DO NOT ATTEND ST JOHN THE BAPTIST RC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

If your child will be in **Year 3** in September 2020, they are now of an age when traditionally children begin their preparation to receive the Sacrament of First Holy Communion. As parents, you have the main role in preparing your child to receive the Sacraments, but you will not be alone. You will be supported by the parish and by a team of dedicated catechists and will receive all the help that you need.

We hold the children's meetings in the Church Hall or in the Church once a month from 4.00pm to 5.00pm on the first Tuesday and Wednesday of every month.

**The Information Evening for all parents, will be on Wednesday 30th September at 7.30pm in the Parish Hall.**

Please complete the form which you will **find on the website** ([www.catholic-andover.org.uk](http://www.catholic-andover.org.uk)) and return it to the **Parish Office**, stating whether you would prefer the Tuesday or the Wednesday afternoon sessions. Though we will do my best to accommodate you, we cannot promise that you will be allocated the day requested as the two sessions need to be similar in number. Please remember that the sessions are only once a month during the programme and should be given priority over other activities.

If you and your child feel ready to take this next step in faith, then **please return your completed form to the Parish Office**, no later than **FRIDAY September 18th**.

**You must also ensure that you are registered with the Parish.**

**It is very important that ALL children join at the start of the First Holy Communion Programme**

**Please include a photocopy of your child's Baptismal Certificate with the form.**

#### **'Coronavirus, Church & You' - Survey results and report**

Results from a major survey assessing responses to the Covid-19 crisis among Catholics in the UK reveals the experience of both clergy and laity during the pandemic. Over 2,500 Catholics (between 19th May and the 26th July) were surveyed about their experiences and attitudes towards lockdown. The survey aimed to ask participants not just what they did but also what they felt about the experience of lockdown, and what they thought the future might hold. How well did people cope with the pandemic? Did it strengthen or weaken their faith? How was it for clergy and lay leaders trying to work in this new environment? How have those receiving ministry found this novel experience? Will virtual ministry become part of the post-pandemic landscape, and will this be a good move for churches? Among its most significant findings:

\* Of those polled 93% accessed Church services online during COVID19. This high figure naturally reflects the fact that this was an online survey circulated directly by Bishops, clergy, religious orders, lay and diocesan networks.

\*While there was a high level of engagement and appreciation of online worship (66%) the results suggest that there is little danger of a mass exodus to the virtual world, with only 4% thinking they would worship mainly or entirely online in the future.

\*A majority (61%) felt that closing church buildings during the lockdown was the right decision.

\*80% think that church buildings are central to faith witness in the community and 84% disagreed with the suggestion that church buildings are an unnecessary burden and expense.

\*82% of Catholics thought that the NHS had responded well to the crisis, whilst just over half of Catholics felt that their church at a national level had responded well (53%) and only about a fifth (22%) of people agreed that the Government led the nation well during the lockdown.

\*Many Catholics polled (63%) had had some contact with clergy or a lay representative during lockdown ranging from pastoral support, practical help, prayer, church admin, or just checking up.

\*Catholics surveyed said that lockdown had helped them to feel closer to God (50%) and more prayerful (54%).

The findings suggest that the experience of Catholics differs from the speculation in some quarters that British Christians as a whole enthusiastically celebrate the replacement of the activities of the Church with online provision. Catholics miss their churches. In particular it seems that younger Catholics were more likely to be opposed to lockdown and felt more strongly about the importance of church buildings than did older people who were surveyed. Professor Francis Davis, University of Birmingham and Oxford, said: "It has been a pleasure to work with Catholic Voices to undertake what may be one of the biggest surveys ever undertaken of the Catholic community in England and Wales. We wanted to find out how Catholics had been coping and what impact the crisis has had on people's faith and their attitudes towards the Church. I am convinced that the report and its findings will be a vital resource in the discussions about the future of the Church in England and Wales."

Brenden Thompson, CEO Catholic Voices, said: "I am pleasantly surprised by many of the findings of this survey. Catholics miss their parishes and church buildings and seem eager to return, not just content with 'virtual Church'. Many it seems, by and large, have backed the Bishops, been grateful for the efforts of clergy to livestream, and many have even felt at times closer to God and been more prayerful than usual. That said, the challenges ahead are real, so if we want to capitalise on this goodwill, we need to start thinking seriously about the conversations that need to happen as more and more begin returning to parishes."

You can find the full report at: [www.catholicvoices.org.uk/s/Coronavirus-Church-You-Survey-Report.pdf](http://www.catholicvoices.org.uk/s/Coronavirus-Church-You-Survey-Report.pdf)

**MASS TIMES AND INTENTIONS FROM 12TH SEPTEMBER - 25TH SEPTEMBER**

*Confessions by appointment - please contact the Parish Office.*

<b>Sat 12th</b>	<b>ANDOVER</b>	<b>MASS</b>	<b>6.00pm</b>	<i>Daphne Channing RIP</i>	<i>(90 places)</i>
<b>Sunday 13th September - Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time</b>					
	<b>WHITCHURCH</b>	<b>MASS</b>	<b>9.00am</b>	<i>For the People of the Parish</i>	<i>(51 places)</i>
	<b>Farleigh School</b>	<b>10.00am</b>	<i>(40 places only, please contact School Office by Friday afternoon to inform Farleigh of your attendance.)</i>		

**Mon 14th** *Closed Mass Tina and Tim Robinson RIP - Anniversary*

**Tue. 15th** **ANDOVER** **MASS** **10.00am** *Eulogia Fernandes - Birthday Blessings* *(90 places)*

**Wed. 16th** *No Mass or Service*

**Thur. 17th** **WHITCHURCH** **MASS** **10.00am** *For the Holy Souls* *(51 places)*

**Fri. 18th** *Closed Mass Daphne Channing RIP*

<b>Sat. 19th</b>	<b>ANDOVER</b>	<b>MASS</b>	<b>6.00pm</b>	<i>Geoff Hall - for health</i>	<i>(90 places)</i>
<b>Sunday 20th September - Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time</b>					
	<b>WHITCHURCH</b>	<b>MASS</b>	<b>9.00am</b>	<i>(51 places)</i>	
	<b>Farleigh School</b>	<b>10.00am</b>	<i>(40 places only, please contact School Office by Friday afternoon to inform Farleigh of your attendance.)</i>		

**Mon 21st** *Closed Mass Audrey Francis - for health*

**Tue. 22nd** **ANDOVER** **MASS** **10.00am** *Frances Eggleston RIP* *(90 places)*

**Wed. 23rd** *No Mass or Service*

**Thur. 24th** **WHITCHURCH** **MASS** **10.00am** *For the Holy Souls* *(51 places)*

**Fri. 25th** *Closed Mass*

*Do remember that you can still book Mass Intentions, the diary has lots of spaces! Please contact the Parish Office.*

**Please pray for:** Patrick Pacini, Audrey Francis, Audrey Stephenson, Esmé Coveney, Doreen Burke, Rita Lane, Valerie Muir, Mary and Alan Daws, Tom Wilkins, Mary Bullough, Sam Hearn, Margaret Williams, Patrick Arnold, Allan Wickens, Di Mussert, Lisa Ramage, Christine Budden, Diane Cooper, Barbara Long, Myra Thompson, John Mills, Sheila Muir, Jo Hibberd, Therese Ayres, Sheila Roberts, Mary Hathaway, Rachel McGarvie, Chris Kirby, Rosemary Gallagher, Eileen Dickie, Annie Maxwell, Judith Everett-Heath, Christopher Brown and Geoff Hall.

Please pray for the souls of Frances Eggleston and Daphne Channing.  
May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, rest in peace.

**MASS TIMES AND CAPACITY** If you are shielding or unable to come to church for any reason, there is currently no obligation to go to Mass on Sunday. There is no obligation for anyone to attend church during these unusual times and no-one should feel guilty about not coming back to church until they feel it is totally safe to do so.

**THE LATEST CAPACITY FOR MASS IN ANDOVER IS 90 AND IN WHITCHURCH IS 51**

Masks must be worn at all Masses and services, unless you have a valid/medical reason, you may remove your mask for Communion. Holy Communion will be distributed at the end of Mass. Each person, after receiving Holy Communion will not return to their place, but exit the Church via the porch, through the open doors. Bishop Philip strongly urges you, out of charity for the health of the minister distributing communion, to receive communion in the hand during this period.

All collection offerings can be given in the basket as you exit the Church.

**You should not attend** if the following apply: **You are sick** (for example, if you are experiencing cold or flu like symptoms) **You are experiencing symptoms of a serious illness, or if you are in the "vulnerable" category.**

It is envisaged that the Sunday obligation will not be imposed until the latter phases of the lifting of restrictions.

**ANDOVER FOODBANK** Thank you all for your continued support in these difficult times.  
This week we are in need of the following food: Tinned **Rice Pudding** and **Long Life Fruit Juice**.  
Also: **Deodorant (men/women/unisex)** and **Dog Food (wet and/or dry)**

**Upcoming Special Collections:** 19th and 20th September - **Home Mission Sunday**

On this day the Bishops invite parishes to pray for the mission of the Church in England and Wales and there is a second collection to support the Bishops' work of evangelisation.

3rd and 4th October is **CAFOD** Harvest Fast Day. More information will be in next week's newsletter about CAFOD  
*Please remember that if you are coming to Mass you can collect your Gift Aid Envelopes from the Parish Office during the week.*