



The Parish of St Mary & St Catherine



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Fr Simon Henry ECLJ GOMLJ BA(Hons) MA

Sixth Sunday of Easter



Saturday 24th May:	SC 5pm	Harry & Celia Walker
5th Sunday of Easter.		Confessions following
Sixth Sunday of Easter. Year C. 25th May	SM 8.30am	Robert Bell
<i>First Holy Communions</i>	SM 10.30am	Neil Bibby, 2nd Anniv RIP
Mon 26th May: St Philip Neri	SM 9.30am	Elaine Perks, BR
Tuesday 27h May: St Augustine of Canterbury	SC 9.30am	Jim Turner, LD
Wed 28th May: Feria of Eastertide	SM 9.30am	Anthony Bagot
	SM 11am	Funeral Service Patricia Young
Thursday 29th May: HOLYDAY OF OBLIGATION	SC 9.30am	Pro Populorum (People of the Parish)
SOLEMNITY OF THE ASCENSION	SM 7pm	Mary Roden
Friday 30th May: St Joan of Arc	SC 7pm	NOVENA & BENEDICTION
Saturday 31st May:	SC 5pm	Thomas Cottam. Mary Hoey.
5th Sunday of Easter. Seventh Sunday of Easter		Confessions following
Seventh Sunday of Easter. Year C. 1st June	SM 8.30am	Pro Populorum (People of the Parish)
	SM 10.30am	Margaret Dickinson, 6th Anniv

THANK YOU for your offerings to the parish each week.

St Catherine's Church 100 Club: Laura Jackson (43).

Fr Simon's blog is at **offerimus tibi domine** (where you will also find the Mass times each week)

SAFEGUARDING REPRESENTATIVES: St Catherine, Elaine Carr. St Mary, Marie Tootell.

MISSALS: MASS CAN BE FOLLOWED: Sunday Pg 485.

Unchanging parts of the Mass in the pink pages. Prayers before Mass, Pg 510. Prayers after Mass, Pg 153.



FIRST HOLY COMMUNIONS:

During the Easter Season we have the suitable setting for rejoicing with the children who will be making their First Holy Communion. This is being done in small “batches”, so that, though the celebration is very special, the setting is the usual Sunday Mass where they and their families will continue to experience Our Lord’s great gift of Himself in the Holy Eucharist in the weeks and years ahead.

St Mary’s church:

25th May, 1st June & 8th June at the 10.30am Mass.

Children will come into the Parish Centre afterwards to receive a certificate and cut their cake!

MAY PROCESSION AND CROWNING

What a lovely afternoon on Sunday! A great crowd for our May Procession and Crowning. Thanks to Mrs Noblet and the school for all their assistance and to our torch bearers, statue carriers and banner bearers. And to the Chorley Silver Band. Another special occasion for our First Communion children. A few damp eyes among our older parishioners as they recalled May Processions of long ago. Memories made again for the children of today. Some great photos on our facebook page; thanks to David Barton for those.



**O Mary we crown thee with blossoms today,
Queen of the Angels and Queen of the May!**



Do look and engage with our parish Facebook page which can find by searching for

Parish of St Mary and St Catherine Labouré, Lancashire.

And our Website at: www.stmarys-euxton.com

THE BEAUTY OF SILENCE IN CHURCH BEFORE THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

Give people space to pray.

“In the silence of the heart God speaks. If you face God in prayer and silence, God will speak to you. Then you will know that you are nothing. It is only when you realize your nothingness, your emptiness, that God can fill you with Himself. Souls of prayer are souls of great silence.” **Mother Teresa of Calcutta**

Your Prayers are asked for all the sick, including: Rita Swarbrick, Rosena Stacey, Vivienne Lee, Tom Miller, Paul Casey, Linda Melling, Tilly Gee, Kathleen Ward, Clare Butler, Maureen MacDonald, Louie Baines, Margaret McNiff, Elle Miller, Mark Duncan, Bill Sutton, Barbara Fow, Mary Ann Monaghan, Bernard Lawson, Mick Marshall, Carol Parkinson, Eric Nielson, Margaret Lawler, Catherine Thompson.

We pray for those who are housebound & for those who love & care for them.

O Mary conceived without sin - Pray for us who have recourse to thee.



PARISH MEETING: Friday 13th June 7.30pm at St Catherine's. Now that we have had some months as one parish with two churches, I am requested by the Archdiocese to hold a meeting to look at the future of plans for our parish, which obviously makes good practical sense. We need to particularly look at how we make best use of our physical, financial and personnel resources in caring for pastoral need and evangelizing. This is an important meeting, so I wanted to give plenty of warning of the date to allow people to be there. Let us also pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the prayers of Our Blessed Lady and St Catherine.

EACH WEEK THERE WILL BE SOME BACKGROUND INFORMATION TO HELP INFORM US.

DEANERY INFORMATION.

For many years we have heard the cry that there is a shortage of priests, but perhaps we have not felt that hitting home in our particular area very much. In our deanery area based around Leyland and Chorley, while curates are a thing of the past, the looming crisis has not been felt as strongly as in other parts of the Archdiocese. For example in Widnes there used to be seven churches. A team ministry of two now look after just three churches, where once there were at least seven priests. Sadly now, in our Deanery, a definite crunch point is on its way.

At the moment there are 103 diocesan priests in the Archdiocese (this excludes priests from Orders and from abroad who are looking after parishes). Even taking into account any ordinations (perhaps one or two a year) it has been worked out that in eight years time, there will only be around 43 diocesan priests! A drop of more than half!

Why is this? Basically, there are large numbers of priests who are nearing the retirement age of 75. Even if a few of them decide they are healthy enough to go on for a few years, this will not really alleviate the need to work out how to cover all the pastoral care presently being given. Many priests, if not most, now have two parishes to run. One priest in this Deanery is about to get three churches. But it is not realistic to think that as men get older, they can take on a third or fourth church. Neither would that be good for real pastoral care and oversight for those the people in those parishes.

The result is that we will be seeing parishes merging as communities without being able to keep all the churches open.

It seems this is going to happen later this year when St Joseph's, Brindle church will close. The Benedictine's who have looked after it for over 200 years are no longer able to provide a priest there and the diocese has no-one to fill it. Thus it is to be merged with the neighbouring parish of St Bede's at Clayton-le-Woods (the priest there already looks after St Chad's near Chorley).

Within the next four years, four priests in our Deanery will reach the retirement age and it is not likely that anyone from outside the deanery will be able to come in to take those parishes over, so the burden will fall on the remaining priests. Inevitably, some of those churches will not survive.

It is not just the shortage of priests, of course. There is also a shortage of parishioners (the very source of new Vocations). Again, it is difficult to see how small congregations can worship well in large buildings or even be able to financially sustain them.

All this might seem gloomy but in fact, the ratio of priests to people in this country is second worldwide only to Malta! England has in the past had a great many priests, due in most part to large influxes of Irish clergy. This led to the increase in dividing up parishes and building more churches. Now that is no longer possible.

However, given the circumstances in which we find ourselves, it is surely better - though emotional and sad in the short term - to build one thriving Christian community gathered around one church, rather than trying to keep two or three struggling communities on the go. A fuller church and the combined talents of a larger group of parishioners will enable a much better opportunity for growth and evangelization. A reminder that a parish is there not just to sustain its existing parishioners but to call back the lapsed and reach out to those yet to find Our Lord.

It is with this background that we need to bring our prayers and thoughts to the present situation in our parish, with its two sites. To quote St John Henry Newman, *"To live is to change, and to change often is to become more perfect."*

ALTAR SERVERS.

I am asking that all the boys making their First Communion consider becoming an altar server. At the moment, apart from our Parish assistant, Michael, there are no servers from St Mary's. The 3 boys you see serving, all started at St Catherine's.

It gives you a special role at Mass, standing at the altar and at the side of the priest, who is there *in persona Christi* (in the person of Christ).

Traditionally, it is always men or boys who serve at the altar. For parents, to explain this to you. It is only since 1994, the Vatican allowed both men and women to serve at the altar. It said that each bishop could - not must - allow females as well as males but that "it will always be very appropriate to follow the noble tradition of having boys serve at the altar". In other words, it has a permissive and not a preceptive character. Nor can any priest be forced to use female altar servers, since, as it states, "*it will always be very appropriate to follow the noble tradition of having boys serve at the altar.*"



This reluctance to extend this ministry to women is not done in a prejudicial way but because serving at the altar is so closely connected with what the priest does. Indeed, servers wear the same vestments as the priest. As recently as Pope St John Paul: he reaffirmed infallibly, the teaching that priests will always be men.

In the secular (and therefore by definition, non-believing) world today there is a desire to amalgamate every role that might be different for men and women but the Church teaches that is not possible - biologically, for a start. There are many other roles that girls can fulfil. At the local level, in due course, by becoming readers, for example, although by the nature of the skills needed, that is usually a little later on. At a grander level, following the example of Pope Francis in recent times and appointing women to head important departments in the Vatican.

So to come back to my original request. I hope that some - or indeed all of the boys, might become altar servers -
AND ANY OTHERS FROM THE PARISH WHO MIGHT BE A LITTLE OLDER. Please speak to Fr Simon.



NEW SUNDAY MISSALS:

For those who ordered them, these have now arrived. You can bring the £20 and collect yours from the sacristy. Please tick off your name on the sheet to indicate you have paid. Thank you.

ASCENSION OF OUR LORD INTO HEAVEN: This Holyday of Obligation falls this Thursday. What is a Holiday of Obligation? The Catechism and Canon Law put it this way: "*On Sundays and other holy days of obligation the faithful are bound to participate in the Mass*" (can. 1247). Every Sunday is a Holyday of Obligation but the Church identifies other great Feastdays for this as well. We are also to try and refrain from work as best we can. You could try asking your boss for the day off on religious grounds and see what they say! In reality, in our modern world, this is unlikely to carry much weight, but you could attempt to find some way of marking it at home - most easily, by attending Mass.

The idea is to allow time for rest, relaxation and family. To sanctify time - that is, to bring the remembrance of matters of Faith into our daily lives. A rest from staring at our phones and a few minutes meditation or prayer is surely an attractive option in our busy lives.

So why not make the most of it? Cut yourself away from the herd careering their way through the week and make some space for you and Our Lord in your household and family.

INSTALLATION OF JOHN SHERRINGTON AS OUR NEW ARCHBISHOP AT LIVERPOOL CATHEDRAL.

This will take place on Tuesday 27th May at 12 noon.

There are tickets available for each parish. Please see Fr Simon if you would like to go.

SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION: We still do not have a date for the Confirmations, due to the retirement and installation of Archbishops! Should be some news soon.

REQUIEM MASS FOR DR ZAKARIYA UDDEN will be offered on Monday 9th June at 12 noon. May he rest in peace.