

HIGH TIDE

*Parish
Magazine*

*Weymouth
St Paul
with Fleet*

MAY 2024



From the Vicar **4**

Jeanne James: Where did the phrase come from **6**

An entertaining and curious article about the origins of various sayings and turns of phrases we all use (well, perhaps we do not use them all... like "piss poor") that reveals some fascinating details of everyday life in late-medieval England.

Sharon Waight: Mary and the Good Samaritan - Compassion in Action **8**

May is a month Christian devotion has dedicated to Mary for centuries. So as our first "Marian article", Sharon shares with us some of the results of her academic research into the theme of compassion and links it to the life of Our Lady.

Two Prayers **9**

After exploring the theme of compassion in the previous article, and learning about the example Our Lady's life offers us, it seemed most fitting to insert two prayers for the gift of compassion. Christian life is about discovering the truth, and praying so that the truth discovered may shape and transform us accordingly.

Bishop Robert Barron: Why the Queenship of Mary matters **10**

Another Marian article (from an external source) for this month of Mary. Bishop Barron invites us to contemplate Mary's role as Queen in the cosmic and supernatural "war" (described so vividly in the Book of Revelation) carried out by evil forces against God's Kingdom. 31 May is the Feast of Mary's Queenship.

Dawn Beutner: Singing the truth with Saint Thomas Aquinas **14**

As the Feast of Corpus Christi, the Feast of Christ's Eucharistic Body, approaches (30 May), we take a look at the life and work of St. Thomas Aquinas, this great medieval theologian. Why? It is his hymns we still sing, even after 700 years, at every Benediction or Eucharistic Procession: "O saving Victim opening wide"

Fr. Peter M.J. Stravinskias: "Rogation Days" and Ascension **16**

An invitation to observe the traditional days of Rogation (6-8 May) and some explanation as to what we do and why. While we do not "beat the bounds" anymore, did you know that we still have Rogation Day procession here at St. Paul's?!

Calendar, Intentions, & Anniversaries **18**

We prayerfully remember the dead and pray for the needs of this world.

Morning and Evening Prayer **20**

Because without the Lord Jesus (prayer!) we can do nothing (John 15,5) and also so that we are (or become) united in prayer!

We continue to explore the Great Feast of Ascension (9 May). After the previous article on Rogation Days (6-8 May), this very short article explores the fascinating customs linked to Ascension-tide. Did you know needlework on this day can be dangerous...?!

From the Book of Common Prayer

30

We continue to explore the immense spiritual treasury of the Church of England. The article concludes with a beautiful prayer for Ascension-tide from the Mozarabic Liturgy, a liturgical tradition that inspired so much Archbishop Thomas Cranmer.

Fr. Peter M.J. Stravinskias: Pentecost and the Blessed Virgin Mary

32

This sermon links the two great themes of this month—Mary and Pentecost—together. The first part of the sermon offers a quick overview of how the Holy Spirit worked in Mary's life; the second part gives a short explanation of the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit, inviting us to “search for them” in our own lives.

Tom Hoopes: The Rosary and the solving of (inter)personal problems

34

Prayer is a powerful means not only by obtaining grace for us from God so that we can live a life consonant to His will but also by teaching us necessary virtues. This article shows us what we can learn from the Glorious Rosary when we “need to solve” problems between us and another person.

Transgenderism, truth, charity, and the Eucharist

36

Interview with Jason Evert about his book “Male, Female, Other?” The interview is followed by a short summary of the Church's teaching on gender theories.

A Christian response to Gender Identity Theory

39

Questions and theories about gender, personal pronouns, transgender people, etc. are more and more frequent and as Christians we need to know how to respond.

Psalm 37: “Commit your ways to the Lord”

42

Are you upset or indignant because of the sinners and their wickedness? Psalm 37 shows us how dangerous and silly such attitude would be and it teaches us the only right path: putting everything into God's hands and trusting him.

*Many thanks to all who have contributed to this issue of the Parish Magazine and to Liz Evans for the proofreading. The next Magazine will be published on **Sunday 26th May**. Please, send all articles, information, news you wish to be publish by Sunday 19th May.*

Front cover: “The Pentecost” (tempera and gold on parchment)
Bohemian Master (1413-1415); Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest (Hungary)

From the Vicar

Dearly Beloved,

Our Christian life is so enriched by the liturgical calendar of the Church that I thought it would be good to make a small (*brace yourselves!*) change to the Parish Magazine which probably you have already noted. The change is that instead of a simple list of contents (Index), you will find a brief summary of every article - and this for three reasons.

The Parish Magazine is put together with a very clear purpose and I was wondering if this purpose was always clear enough. This was indeed my first reason for this change. The ultimate purpose of everything we do here at St. Paul's is a greater love for God.

Now, St. Thomas Aquinas clearly teaches that we cannot love what we do not know and this is also true of God. How can we love him, for example, for his goodness, if we know nothing or very little about it. And so, in order to offer an opportunity to all to grow in love for God, the Parish Magazine's main purpose is to offer knowledge. Knowledge about God and his "things." Not randomly, but in a systematic, thematised way which helps our learning.

For example, if you read the first two pages, hopefully it will become clear how the main themes of this month are Mary, Ascension, and Pentecost - and their relevance to our Christian life.

The second reason for extending the "Index" was that I actually do know how long it takes to read the whole Parish Magazine. Not only there are a lot of articles but some of them are not the easiest of reads. It can happen therefore that by the time you read, for example, about Rogation processions (see page 16), the actual Rogation Days are long gone... Having a summary for each article offers everyone the possibility to be informed, so to say, of what is happening in the liturgical and spiritual life of the Church (and of St. Paul's) during a given month and be "prepared" and well-informed so that you can participate more fully and more fruitfully in that spiritual and liturgical life.

Finally, I hope this new arrangement of the first pages of High Tide will encourage more people to actually read the Parish Magazine. I am not trying to live under the false illusion that this magazine is the "daily bread" of everyone in our congregation and that everyone reads from cover to cover. However, I certainly hope that everyone will be curious enough to read through the first two pages at least and that, by doing so, their imagination will be captured by the summaries and help them to find something of interest.

Our Christian faith, liturgical inheritance, and spiritual life are so rich and so amazingly and lovingly ordered by a God - whom we see as Perfect Beauty, Absolute Truth, and Supreme Good - that anyone should be most

excited to embark on a journey of exploring them. This our Parish Magazine intends to be both an invitation to and a means of this exploration, now hopefully made a bit more accessible.

May is the month of hope and renewal, of joy and beauty in our northern hemisphere with flowers, colours, and sweet scents everywhere. Warmer and sunnier days and more gentle temperatures lift up our mood. No wonder the Church arranged her liturgical Calendar in such a way that Ascension, Pentecost, and Corpus Christi often are celebrated in May.

These great events and feast days of our salvation offer us a glimpse of heaven with its light and warmth, joy and beauty. On the day of Ascension our mortal bodies find a dwelling place on God's blossom in heaven. Pentecost sees God himself taking abode in our soul, mind, and heart. Corpus Christi is a witness to God's deepest desire to be united to us, his creatures in the most intimate way. How much joy and blessedness beyond understanding is there for us in any one of these Feasts... let alone in all three of them together!

Could anyone wonder, then, why Our Lady "claims" May to herself. The fairest of all creatures, Immaculate in her heart and soul, is the most attractive, most beautiful example of God's work in us, human beings. Do you want to see the bodily glories of a faithful disciple? Glories that the Ascension of the Lord made possible? Look at Mary's Assumption. Do you enquire about the virtues and holiness the Holy Spirit, descended from heaven at Pentecost, can bring about in our souls? Observe Our Lady's life! Do you want to know about the light and joy the intimate union with God gives? Union, to the foretaste of which, we already have access in the Eucharist? Consider Mary's joys! Her gentle soul, faithful heart, pure mind, humble spirit, and ardent virtues - chief amongst all of them her love and charity - tell us so much about God, heaven, and ourselves.

There she stands, in front of us, especially in this month of May, exalted and crowned with glory, yet humble and most loving. There she stands calling us to look at her so that we can see God more clearly; to consider her virtues so that we can admire God and his gifts more; to ask her to pray with us so that we learn to pray better. There she stands, calling us, her children, to give ourselves, as she did, to God more fully through her maternal hands. There she stands, surrounded by light and holiness so that she can arouse admiration in us - admiration aimed not at herself but at our God who is so loving, so caring, so generous, that, as the prayers of the Mass put it, "in creating our human nature, he wonderfully dignified it, and still more wonderfully restored it" so that we can dwell in him and he is us.

Assuring you of my prayers, I am,
ever yours in Christ,

Fr. Gregory

Where did that phrase come from?

Jeanne James writes:



Here are some facts about the 1500s.

They used to use urine to tan animal skins, so families used to all pee in a pot and then once a day it was taken and sold to the tannery. If you had to do this to survive you were “*piss poor*.” But worse than that were the really poor folk who couldn’t even afford to buy a pot; they “*didn’t have a pot to piss in*” and were the lowest of the low.

Most people got married in June because they took their yearly bath in May, and they still smelled pretty good by June. Since they were starting to smell, however, brides carried a bouquet of flowers to hide the body odour. Hence the custom today of carrying a bouquet when getting married.

Baths consisted of a big tub filled with hot water. The man of the house had the privilege of the nice clean water, then all the other sons and men, then the women, and finally the children. Last of all the babies. By then the water was so dirty you could actually lose someone in it ... hence the saying, “*Don’t throw the baby out with the bath water!*”

Houses had thatched roofs, thick straw piled high, with no wood underneath. It was the only place for animals to get warm, so all the cats and other small animals (mice, bugs) lived in the roof. When it rained it became slippery and sometimes the animals would slip and fall off the roof, resulting in the idiom, “*It’s raining cats and dogs.*”

There was nothing to stop things from falling into the house. This posed a real problem in the bedroom where bugs and other droppings could mess up your nice clean bed, therefore, a bed with big posts and a sheet hung over the top afforded some protection. That’s how canopy beds came into existence.

The floor was dirt. Only the wealthy had something other than dirt, leading folks to coin the phrase “*dirt poor*.”

The wealthy had slate floors that would get slippery in the winter when wet, so they spread thresh (straw) on floor to help keep their footing. As the winter wore on, they added more thresh until, when you opened the door, it would all start slipping outside. A piece of wood was placed in the entrance-way, subsequently creating a “*thresh hold*.”

In those old days, they cooked in the kitchen with a big kettle that always hung over the fire. Every day they lit the fire and added things to the pot. They ate mostly vegetables and did not get much meat. They would eat the stew for dinner, leaving leftovers in the pot to get cold overnight and then start over the next day. Sometimes stew had food in it that had been there for quite a while, and thus the rhyme, “*Peas porridge hot, peas porridge cold, peas porridge in the pot nine days old.*”

Sometimes they could obtain pork, which made them feel quite special. When visitors came over, they would hang up their bacon to show off. It was a sign of wealth that a man could “*bring home the bacon.*” They would cut off a little to share with guests and would all sit around and “*chew the fat.*”

Those with money had plates made of pewter. Food with high acid content caused some of the lead to leach onto the food, causing lead poisoning death. This happened most often with tomatoes, so for the next 400 years or so, tomatoes were considered poisonous.

Bread was divided according to status. Workers got the burnt bottom of the loaf, the family got the middle, and guests got the top, or the “*upper crust.*”

Lead cups were used to drink ale or whisky. The combination would sometimes knock the imbibers out for a couple of days. Someone walking along the road would take them for dead and prepare them for burial. They were laid out on the kitchen table for a couple of days and the family would gather around and eat and drink and wait and see if they would wake up, creating the custom of holding a wake.

England is small and the local folks started running out of places to bury people. So they would dig up coffins and would take the bones to a bone-house, and reuse the grave. When reopening these coffins, 1 out of 25 coffins were found to have scratch marks on the inside and they realized they had been burying people alive, so they would tie a string on the wrist of the corpse, lead it through the coffin and up through the ground and tie it to a bell. Someone would have to sit out in the graveyard all night (*the graveyard shift*) to listen for the bell; thus, someone could be *saved by the bell* or was considered a *dead ringer*.

So now you can impress your dinner guests with your knowledge of the history of certain phrases!

Mary and the Good Samaritan - Compassion in Action

Sharon Waight writes:



The word compassion originates from the Latin *compati* and means to ‘suffer together with’. Compassion is ancient enough to have borne witness to many cultures as well as most world religions. The world’s major religions all encourage people to be compassionate and for some religions compassion is the most important of all virtues.

Over time history has taught us that being compassionate has extended this definition to not only being confronted with the suffering of another but feeling motivated to respond to it and by a desire to relieve the suffering.

The parable of the ‘Good Samaritan’ does play a key role in Christians’ understanding of compassion and service to one’s neighbour. The source of the Samaritan’s compassion was in seeing the man in distress and being motivated to help him, that is, to act. In this parable compassion is also about getting involved when others are reluctant. Both the Levite and the Priest passed by on the other side, whilst the Samaritan fulfilled the poor man’s needs.

Jesus emerges as a teacher and often explained in parables who God was and what He expected of his people. As we are created by God, we have an instinct to care for others, to have empathy for the pain, sorrows, losses, and problems and needs of others. Compassion extends or deepens being empathetic. Jesus is very much interested in the value, attributes, and qualities of compassion, in being compassionate, showing compassion, mercy and forgiveness.

Reflecting on the role of Mary, Mary shows us compassion in action. She suffers for Jesus and she also suffers with Jesus. As a mother, Mary loved Jesus more than herself, she united with him in accepting the will of God, extending compassion in giving new life for all. Thus, a profound example of being and remaining compassionate for her Son and for each of us. Mary’s compassion (to suffer with) is filled with faith, love, and hope. This level of compassion shows us that an individual involvement with another, looking at another person in need is also about looking at our ‘hands’ and realising that they may already contain what others need.

I am currently researching compassion and spirituality as part of my Doctorate (PhD). Some early emerging thoughts from my study on what does compassion look like, what does it mean to have compassion and how is compassion given or, in Christianity terms, ‘to be of service to others,’ include:

- Taking note of the needs of others and praying for them
- Listening to those in need
- Being truly present when listening to another person
- Being attentive to another person
- Showing kindness
- Being honest
- Wanting to truly connect with the person in need
- Helping people to understand the reason for their needs
- Guiding people to help themselves
- Helping people find a place where help is available

Compassion can be defined as an essential moral, ethical virtue fundamental to human experience, a reflection on human nature itself.

Mary, pray for us, your children, to be compassionate like you!

A Prayer for Compassion — Dear Heavenly Father, help me to be gentle towards every person I encounter today, in thought, word and deed. May I recognize that others are facing difficult circumstances which I know nothing about. Oh Lord, that others would encounter You when they meet me today! Still my thoughts, bridle my tongue and open my heart. Fill me with a spirit of forgiveness and generosity. As it be Your will Lord, place the words in my mouth that others need to hear today. Help me to share Your unfailing compassion with all people, especially those with whom I live and work. In Your Mighty Name I pray, Amen.

Prayer to Mary, Mother of Compassion — O Holy Virgin, Mother of God, Queen of the universe, in the midst of all your glory, we ask you not to forget the sorrows of this world. You gave birth to the Consolation of the world, the Ransom of captives, the Health of the weak, and the Joy of the afflicted. Cast a look of pity upon all who struggle against life’s difficulties, and who cease not to feel all its bitterness. Have pity on all who have been separated from those they love. Have pity on the lonely and friendless. O Holy Mother, show a mother’s compassion toward the sorrowful and those who tremble under life’s afflictions. With your prayers, obtain for them hope and peace. Amen.

Why the Queenship of Mary matters

by Bishop Robert Barron



The Church annually celebrates the feast of the Queenship of Mary on 31 May. I would imagine that most people, upon hearing of this celebration, would think of it as something rather sweet and sentimental, a quaint devotion for grandmothers with a taste for saccharine spirituality. But when we examine this feast as we should, through biblical eyes, a very different picture emerges.

The clearest scriptural indication that Mary of Nazareth is a queen is a remarkable passage in the 12th chapter of the Book of Revelation. The visionary author, St. John the Apostle, sees an extraordinary sign in the sky: a woman clothed with the sun, the moon at her feet, and a coronet of 12 stars on her head. Twelve, of course, is a designation of the tribes of Israel, and the crown is a rather unambiguous indication that we are dealing with a royal figure. It soon becomes clear that this woman is not only a queen but, more precisely, a queen mother, for we hear that she is labouring to give birth to a king, one who is “destined to rule the nations with an iron rod.”

Both the queen mother and the infant king are involved in a terrible struggle. The visionary tells us that a fearsome dragon is poised to devour the baby as soon as it comes forth. But God sweeps the child up and brings him to the safety of the divine throne, while the mother flees to the desert where she finds refuge. In the wake of this, a war breaks out between “Michael and his angels” and the dragon and his angelic supporters. This image is, of course, symbolically rich and multivalent, but at the very least it indicates that the queen and her kingly son are protagonists in a spiritual warfare of some magnitude. They are, in a word, warriors.

Just before this passage, we find the vision of the heavenly temple. Amid flashes of lightning, peals of thunder, and a mighty hailstorm, the seer spies the Ark of the Covenant within the temple. The ark, we recall, was the container of the remnants of the Ten Commandments, and hence the most sacred object for ancient Israel. Placed within the Holy of Holies in the Jerusalem Temple, the ark was understood to be the link between heaven and earth, the definitive bearer of the divine presence.

When King David brought the ark into the Holy City, he danced before it with reckless abandon. Moreover, at various points throughout its history, Israel brought the ark into battle, most notably when the priests marched with it seven times around the walls of Jericho, before those battlements came tumbling down.

Now the juxtaposition of the vision of the ark in the heavenly temple and the vision of the queen mother clothed with the sun cannot have been accidental. St. John is telling us that Mary, the bearer of the Word of God made flesh, was the Ark of the Covenant par excellence.

Indeed, when she visited her cousin Elizabeth, pregnant with the unborn John the Baptist, he leapt in his mother's womb for joy, a beautiful infant imitation of the dance of David before the true ark. Both ark and queen are associated with spiritual warfare. In her Magnificat prayer, recorded in the Gospel of Luke, Mary speaks of the God "who has cast down the mighty from their thrones and lifted up the lowly." Like her Son, Mary does not fight with the puny weapons of the world but rather with the weapons of love, forgiveness, compassion, and provocative nonviolence.

Those who have experienced a Jesuit retreat based upon the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius will recognize the "two standards" meditation. Ignatius asks the retreatant to imagine a great field of battle. Arrayed on one side, under the standard of the Church, is the army of Christ; and on the other, under the standard of Satan, is the army of the dark powers. Then Ignatius compels the retreatant to make a decision, indeed the most fundamental and important choice imaginable, the election that will determine everything else he will say and do for the rest of his life: Which army will you join?

Bob Dylan posed the same stark spiritual option in his 1979 song "Gotta Serve Somebody:" ("It may be the devil or it may be the Lord, but you're gonna have to serve somebody.") In other areas of life, a fair amount of nuance and subtlety is called for, but at the most basic level, where one determines the fundamental orientation of one's life, things actually become quite simple and clear.

I would suggest that the feast of the Queenship of Mary has to do with this choice: Where do you stand in the great spiritual struggle? With whose army do you fight? Consequently, what type of "arms" do you choose? Do you march under the banner of the Queen Mother and her Son, or with their enemies? Do you go out with the Ark of the Covenant or against it? Say what you want about those questions, but they are neither sweet nor sentimental.

(This article was originally published on CNA on Sept. 11, 2012)

**For Corpus Christi:
Singing the truth with Saint Thomas Aquinas**

by Dawn Beutner:

Saint Thomas Aquinas is justly celebrated as one of the greatest minds in the history of the Church, a brilliant man whose work has continued to impact theology in every age since his death in 1274. He was declared the fifth “Doctor of the Church” in 1567.

Thomas was probably born around the year 1225 and was the youngest son of the count of Aquino in Italy. He was educated by Benedictine monks at Monte Cassino and later studied at the University of Naples. When his mother found out that he had decided to become a Dominican, she was so upset that she had him kidnapped and locked up for a year (sending prostitutes, to no avail, into his cell...) She did not want *her* son to go around begging for his food like one of those poor Franciscans.

Thomas, who had a contemplative nature and was quite certain about his vocation, patiently spent his time in solitary confinement studying and memorizing the Bible. When his family finally gave up and released him, Thomas was ordained a priest, studied at universities in Paris and Cologne, and spent the rest of his life as a faithful Dominican.

Most people today know about Thomas’ accomplishments as a theologian and philosopher. They know that his writings were voluminous, that he was so brilliant that he could dictate multiple works to different secretaries at the same time, and that an entire school of thought—Thomism—arose from his work. But people tend to forget that he also brought about a better understanding of truth through hymns. After all, the ability to compose music and lyrics is a gift from God. Many holy bishops, monks, and nuns have been given this gift and have written hymns to give glory to God, bless our Sunday worship, and even help Christians understand Church teaching.

In the eleventh century archdeacon Berengar of Tours caused a public outcry when he argued that the bread and wine do not become the Body and Blood of Christ after the consecration. Berengar later accepted Catholic teaching, although he renounced it, accepted it, and renounced it again before he finally died in union with the Church. The controversy over what happens to the bread and wine during Mass continued for many decades. The Fourth Lateran Council tried to clear up the confusion by introducing the term transubstantiation in 1215. In 1263, one of the most famous eucharistic miracles in Church history occurred in Bolsena, Italy, apparently as a divine

response to a priest's inner questioning about whether or not Jesus was truly present. When the host in the priest's hands began to bleed, he got his answer.

The priest immediately reported the miracle to the pope. This pope, Urban IV, had been the bishop of Verdun prior to becoming pope, and he had become acquainted with a devout nun named Juliana of Liège (1192-1258), who lived in his diocese. Juliana had spent many years unsuccessfully trying to convince people that our Lord wanted the Church to offer a feast in honour of the Blessed Sacrament. The eucharistic miracle of Bolsena and Saint Juliana's arguments apparently convinced Urban IV to institute the Feast of Corpus Christi in 1264.

But who could Urban call upon to write the Office of the Mass and the Liturgy of the Hours for his new feast with all its hymns, antiphons, and sequences? Who could both safely and beautifully write about such great mysteries? The pope turned to the faithful, scholarly Dominican priest, Thomas of Aquino.

The four hymns Saint Thomas wrote for this feast are titled: *Pange lingua gloriosi*; *Verbum supernum prodiens*; *Lauda Sion Salvatorem*, and *Sacris solemniis*. Most people don't recognize those titles, or at least so they think. But who have not heard the final verses of these hymns: *Therefore we before him bending*; *O saving Victim opening wide*; or *Panis angelicus* (the most popular setting being by Cesar Franck and often sung by Pavarotti and Bocelli). Exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament all over the world would not be complete without us chanting these verses. Indeed, they all are present in most parish hymn book, such as, for example, the New English Hymnal.

In these hymns, Thomas reminds us that Jesus is the divine Victim who saved us from Hell on Calvary centuries ago—and yet He is truly present before our very eyes in the Eucharist. The Blessed Sacrament we receive at Mass looks like bread and tastes like wine, but the mystery of Jesus' Presence is beyond what our senses and our minds can comprehend. All we can do to respond to this inestimable gift is to praise Him and trust in His promises.

After centuries, we still sing these hymns unaltered because Thomas had a gift with words, and his understanding of the Sacrament kept him from making unfortunate word choices that might lead people into error or later require modification. Putting it simply, we sing them because the words he wrote are both beautiful and true.

It is a bit of a miracle that no one in seven centuries has been able to come up with better words for us to praise our Lord's mysterious and miraculous presence in the Eucharist.

(originally published in The Dispatch)

“Rogation Days” and Ascension

by Fr. Peter M.J. Stravinskas

The three days prior to Ascension Thursday (6-8 May in 2024) have been traditionally known as “Rogation Days” or the “Minor Litanies,” with the “Major Rogation” being observed on 25 April. Their purpose was to beg God (*rogare* in Latin means to ask or beg) for His blessings on the harvest, thus prayers offered at the time of the sowing of the seed. The liturgical rites surrounding the days consisted of the Litany of the Saints and an outdoor procession encompassing the parish boundaries and blessing the fields therein.

Actually, these days had their origin in the Robigalia of Pagan Rome as days of prayer (with processions) set aside to implore various gods for good weather and an abundant harvest. As the Church “baptized” these “Rogation Days” and Ascension rituals, they also became days of penitence, the idea being that one needed to do penance in order to gain a favourable response to one’s prayers to the Almighty.

With the reform of the liturgy and the calendar in 1969 in the Roman Catholic Church (with its usual impact on the Catholic wing of the Church of England), the change was intended to make the ceremonies more meaningful and better celebrated; the reality, like so many other changes, had the exact opposite effect, so that the rogation days disappeared into oblivion for the most part.

This is most unfortunate for any number of reasons, however, the most important in my judgment is that it has brought about a loss of the Church’s connection to rural life – a loss for those who work our farms and a tragic loss for city-dwellers who fail to appreciate how dependent we are on the land for the basic necessities of life.

Prayer is a sign of faith – an implicit and explicit acknowledgment that: a) Someone exists to hear our prayer, and, b) That Someone is more powerful than we and so can indeed do something for us. Prayer is a declaration of dependence.

We can distinguish four “ends” or goals of prayer, best recalled through the acronym “ACTS”: adoration, contrition, thanksgiving, supplication. Notice, of course, that “supplication” or its synonym “petition” comes last. If we are honest, though, we must admit that most of our prayer is that of supplication, burning up the wires between ourselves and the Almighty with our wants.

That said, we are going to attend to that last form of prayer, all the while avoiding the spiritual pitfall of turning to God only in time of dire need. You know the type: No atheists in foxholes.

Therefore, first of all, I want to encourage you to be mature believers who understand what Our Lord means about the necessity of praying always (Luke 18,1). Use that wonderful custom of the “Morning Offering” to consecrate your entire day to Almighty God and, in that way, be able to “pray always” by transforming your very day into an act of homage and prayer.

We must remember that the prayer of petition is pleasing to God, because He is a gracious and loving Father, who wants to hear about and provide for the needs of us, His children. Go to the Lord with your concerns, both humbly and confidently. Realize that when you say, “Give us this day our daily bread,” you are including each and every human need. Nevertheless, be embarrassingly specific, whether your request is for yourself or for others.

At the same time, remember another line of the Lord’s Prayer: “Thy will be done.” In other words, an essential part of the prayer of petition is the ability to say that you want this particular thing *only* if God wants it. This calls for a willingness to have your will conformed to His.

As a seminarian, I was working in a parish school. After the Christmas break, I visited the classrooms, asking the children what gifts they had given their family members and what gifts they had received. A second grader teased one of his classmates about not getting the bike for Christmas for which he had prayed during Advent. “*You prayed and prayed, and God didn’t answer your prayer,*” said the one fellow. “*Yes, He did,*” - the other responded - “*He said, No.*” That little guy knew the meaning of listening; he also knew another aspect of prayer that we need to consider, which is openness.

The openness to hear God say “no” is a sign of a mature faith because it demonstrates a firm trust in God who never allows His children to suffer in vain. Notice, I didn’t say He doesn’t allow us to suffer; I said He doesn’t allow us to suffer *in vain*. Human suffering can always be redemptive and a part of the divine plan leading to our growth as human beings and our salvation as believers.

Jesus encouraged us never to “lose heart” in prayer (Lk 18,1). “Perseverance” is the name of the virtue. If the goal is worthwhile, the effort should be proportionate. St. Monica prayed for the conversion of her son Augustine for thirty years. How many of us would expend that kind of energy for a spiritual reality? However, those are the first things for which we should pray. Again, the Lord’s Prayer is an example and pattern for our own prayer: The desire for God’s name to be revered, for His Kingdom to be

established on earth, and for His Will to be done. Those are the things that really matter and so call for genuine perseverance.

Finally, we must recall the importance of solidarity in prayer. Moses couldn't pray effectively without the assistance of Aaron and Hur (Exodus 17,8-13); nor can we do so on our own. As Christians, members of Christ's mystical Body (the Church), we believe that our personal prayer is united to the perfect prayer of Christ and, through Baptism, to that of every other Christian believer on earth, in Heaven, and in Purgatory. What a consoling doctrine! How uplifting to know that no Christian stands alone before "the throne of grace" (Hebrews 4,16), but in the company of all the redeemed from the very dawn of time.

The awareness of Christian solidarity in prayer is the very human and natural reason for "not losing heart." The supernatural reason is faith. Do you have the faith to pray always?

Rogation-tide prayers in church, when we sing the Litanies in procession, is a beautiful expression of this Christian solidarity in prayer: we rise our petitions jointly, as one body, with one heart and one voice, to our Father in common.

Let me conclude these reflections with the insightful words of St. John Henry Cardinal Newman:

To be religious is, in other words, to have the habit of prayer, or to pray always. This is what Scripture means by doing all things to God's glory; that is, so placing God's presence and will before us, and so consistently acting with a reference to Him, that all we do becomes one body and course of obedience, witnessing without ceasing to Him Who made us, and Whose servants we are; and in its separate parts promoting more or less directly His glory, according as each particular thing we happen to be doing admits more or less of a religious character.

Simply put: We pray more intensely during these special days, precisely so as to gain the holy habit of "praying always."

At St. Paul's Rogation days will be observed in their traditional form: Mass on the three days (6-8 May) will start with Procession (inside the church) and the Litany of Saints, followed by Rogation-tide votive Mass. ***Come and join us*** as we pray to God for a good harvest, for an end to hunger and deprivation, for a more just distribution of goods in the world.

**Calendar, Service times,
and Prayer Intentions**

Anniversaries of death

Order of Morning and Evening Prayer

Calendar for May 2024

WED	1 st	ST. PHILIP & JAMES APOSTLES	10am
THU	2 nd	St. Athanasius Bishop	6pm
FRI	3 rd	FINDING OF THE HOLY CROSS	12pm
SAT	4 th	The Holy Martyrs of England & Wales	9.30am
SUN	5 th	5TH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER	10.30am, 5pm
MON	6 th	St. Dominic Savio (Rogation Day)	9am
TUE	7 th	St. Stanislaus Bishop, Martyr (Rogation Day)	9am
WED	8 th	<i>Vigil</i> (Rogation Day)	10am
THU	9 th	ASCENSION	10am, 6pm
FRI	10 th	St. Antoninus Bishop (<i>Monthly Requiem</i>)	12pm
SAT	11 th	<i>Of Our Lady, Queen of the Apostles</i>	9.30am
SUN	12 th	SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION	10.30am, 5pm
MON	13 th	St. Robert Bellarmin Bishop	9am
TUE	14 th	<i>St. Boniface, Martyr</i>	9am
WED	15 th	St. John Baptist de la Salle	10am
THU	16 th	St. Ubald Bishop	6pm
FRI	17 th	St. Paschal Bylon	12pm
SAT	18 th	<i>Vigil</i>	9.30am
SUN	19 th	PENTECOST (WHIT SUNDAY)	10.30am, 5pm
MON	20 th	WHIT MONDAY	10am
TUE	21 st	WHIT TUESDAY	10am
WED	22 nd	WHIT WEDNESDAY (Ember Day)	10am
THU	23 rd	WHIT THURSDAY	6pm
FRI	24 th	WHIT FRIDAY (Ember Day)	12pm
SAT	25 th	WHIT SATURDAY (Ember Day)	9.30am
SUN	26 th	TRINITY SUNDAY	10.30am, 5pm
MON	27 th	St. Bede the Venerable	9am
TUE	28 th	<i>Feria</i>	9am
WED	29 th	St. Mary Magdalen Pazzi	10am
THU	30 th	CORPUS CHRISTI	6pm
FRI	31 st	Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary	12pm

Daily Intentions



Anniversaries of death

We pray for/with...

- 1st Bishop Paul Thomas - *Sarah Grainger, Maurice Galling, Richard Limb*
- 2nd Priests and vocations
- 3rd Dying - *Kenneth Kemp pr., Hamish Roger Grierson*
- 4th Shrine of Walsingham

- 5th Our Parish - *Marjorie Wray, Bert Sertin, Daisy Bown*
- 6th Beechcroft & Conifers - *Joy Scriven*
- 7th Those who hunger
- 8th Our PCC - *Jim Clothier, Gillian Hubbard*
- 9th Our Parish - *Jane Taylor*
- 10th The departed - *Tony Hamsshaw*
- 11th Our Cell of O.L.W. - *David Thomas bp.*

- 12th Our Parish - *Panlette Gasser*
- 13th Our Choir & Organists
- 14th Persecuted Christians
- 15th Families - *Roger Pittard pr.*
- 16th Peace especially in Israel, Palestine, & Ukraine
- 17th Deeper love for the Eucharist - *Marjorie Bishop, Norman Moore*
- 18th Migrants and refugees - *Frank Woods*

- 19th Our Parish - *Carol Wilson*
- 20th Each other & for the gifts of the Holy Spirit
- 21st Those who do not know or love the Lord Jesus
- 22nd Our neighbourhood and its coming to Christ in faith - *Jenifer Cooper*
- 23rd The renewal of our congregations in Christ
- 24th The sick
- 25th Our missionary & evangelistic renewal

- 26th Our Parish
- 27th Our Servers
- 28th Our Benefactors - *Dick Evans, Nan Evans*
- 29th Reconciliation in our church & in our families - *Janet Allen*
- 30th A greater eucharistic love & devotion
- 31st The grace of last perseverance & of a holy death - *Nigel Brown*

If there are names missing from the list or you want to add names, please, talk to the Vicar.

Open, O Lord, my mouth to bless thy holy Name; cleanse also my heart from all vain, evil, and wandering thoughts; enlighten my understanding and kindle my affections; that I may worthily, attentively, and devoutly recite this Morning Prayer, and so be meet to be heard before the presence of thy divine Majesty. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

MORNING PRAYER

Until the 25th of May: Joy to thee, O Queen of Heaven, alleluia. He whom thou wast meet to bear, alleluia. As he promised, hath arisen, alleluia. Pour for us to God thy prayer, alleluia.

V. Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia.

R. For the Lord has risen indeed, alleluia.

V. Let us pray. O God, who through the resurrection of Thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ didst vouchsafe to give joy to the world: grant, we beseech thee, that through His Mother, the Virgin Mary, we may obtain the joys of everlasting life. Through Christ our Lord. R. Amen.

From the 26th of May: V. The Angel of the Lord brought tidings to Mary.

R. And she conceived by the Holy Ghost.

V. Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

R. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death. Amen.

V. Behold the handmaid of the Lord.

R. Be it unto me according to thy word. V. Hail Mary... R. Holy Mary...

V. And the Word was made flesh.

R. And dwelt amongst us. V. Hail Mary... R. Holy Mary...

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

V. Let us pray. We beseech thee, O Lord, pour thy grace into our hearts, that as we have known the Incarnation of thy Son Jesus Christ by the message of an angel, so by his Cross and Passion we may be brought unto the glory of his Resurrection; through the same Christ our Lord. R. Amen.

V. O Lord, open my lips. R. And my mouth shall proclaim your praise.
V. O God, make speed to save me. R. O Lord, make haste to help me.
V. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
R. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen. Alleluia!

V. Let us rejoice in the Lord; let us joyfully sing to God our Saviour! Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us joyfully sing psalms to him!

R. Alleluia, the Spirit of the Lord fills the world: alleluia.

V. For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods. In his hands are the depths of the earth; and the heights of the mountains are his.

R. O come, let us worship Him, alleluia.

V. The sea is his, for who but he made it; and his hands fashioned the dry land. O come, let us worship and fall down, and weep before the Lord who made us! For he is the Lord our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.

R. Alleluia, the Spirit of the Lord fills the world: alleluia.

V. Today if you shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts: As in the provocation, on the day of temptation in the wilderness, where your fathers tempted me, and put me to the test, and they saw my works.

R. O come, let us worship Him, alleluia.

V. For forty years I loathed that generation, and I said: They always err in heart, they have not known my ways, so I swore in my wrath: they shall not enter my rest.

R. Alleluia, the Spirit of the Lord fills the world: alleluia.

V. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

R. O come, let us worship Him, alleluia.

HYMN

Eternal Monarch, King most high,
Whose blood hath brought redemption nigh,
By whom the death of Death was wrought
And conquering grace's battle fought:

Ascending to the throne of might,
And seated at the Father's right,
All power in heaven is Jesu's own,
That here his manhood had not known.

That so, in nature's triple frame,
Each heavenly and each earthly name,
And things in hell's abyss abhorred,
May bend the knee and own him Lord.

Yea, angels tremble when they see
How changed is our humanity;
That flesh hath purged what flesh had stained,
And God, the flesh of God, hath reigned.

Be thou our joy and strong defence,
 Who art our future recompense:
 So shall the light that springs from thee
 Be ours through all eternity.

To thee we therefore humbly pray
 That thou wouldst purge our sins away,
 And draw our hearts by cords of grace
 To thy celestial dwelling-place.

So when the judgement day shall come,
 And all must rise to meet their doom,
 Thou wilt remit the debts we owe,
 And our lost crowns again bestow.

O risen Christ, ascended Lord,
 All praise to thee let earth accord,
 Who art, while endless ages run,
 With Father and with Spirit One. Amen.

The appointed Psalm(s) and Reading(s) follow:

1	Psalm 139	Proverbs 4,10-18 James 1,1-12	13	93	Numbers 22,1-35 Luke 7,36-end
2	57	Numbers 13,17-end Luke 5,27-end	14	96	Numbers 23,1-12 Luke 8,1-15
3	138	Numbers 14,1-25 Luke 6,1-11	15	29	Numbers 23,13-end Luke 8,16-25
4	146	Numbers 14,26-end Luke 6,12-26	16	24	Numbers 24 Luke 8,26-39
5	104 v. 26-32	Ezekiel 47,1-12 John 21,1-19	17	28	Numbers 27,12-end Luke 8,40-end
6	65	Numbers 16,1-35 Luke 6,27-38	18	43	Numbers 32,1-27 Luke 9,1-17
7	126	Numbers 16,36-end Luke 6,39-end	19	145	Wisdom 7,15-27 1 Corinthians 12,4-13
8	132	Numbers 17,1-11 Luke 7,1-10	20	126	Joshua 1 Luke 9,18-27
9	110, 150	Isaiah 52,7-end Hebrews 7,26-end	21	132	Joshua 2 Luke 9,28-36
10	81	Numbers 20,1-13 Luke 7,11-17	22	119 v. 153-end	Joshua 3 Luke 9,37-50
11	47	Numbers 21,4-9 Luke 7,18-35	23	143	Joshua 4 Luke 9,51-end
12	76	Isaiah 14,3-15 Revelation 4,1-13	24	144	Joshua 5 Luke 10,1-16

25	147	Joshua 6,1-20 Luke 10,17-24	29	3	Joshua 8,1-29 Luke 11,1-13
26	33 v. 1-12	Proverbs 8,22-31 2 Corinthians 13,11-end	30	147	Deuteronomy 8,2-16 1 Corinthians 10,1-17
27	1	Joshua 7,1-15 Luke 10,25-37	31	5	Joshua 9 Luke 11,14-37
28	2	Joshua 7,16-end Luke 10,38-end			

Each reading ends with these words:

V. This is the word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

BENEDICTUS

Ant: Send forth your Spirit, alleluia, and you shall renew the face of the earth, alleluia, alleluia.

Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel, *
 who has come to his people and set them free.
 He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour, *
 born of the house of his servant David.
 Through his holy prophets God promised of old *
 to save us from our enemies, from the hands of all that hate us,
 To show mercy to our ancestors, *
 and to remember his holy covenant.
 This was the oath God swore to our father Abraham: *
 to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
 Free to worship him without fear, *
 holy and righteous in his sight all the days of our life.
 And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High, *
 for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,
 To give his people knowledge of salvation *
 by the forgiveness of all their sins.
 In the tender compassion of our God *
 the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
 To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, *
 and to guide our feet into the way of peace.
 Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, *
 and to the Holy Spirit.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, *
world without end. Amen.

Ant: Send forth your Spirit, alleluia, and you shall renew the face of the earth, alleluia, alleluia.

V. Let us pray. – *Intercessions are offered for the Church, for the Sovereign (the world), for those in need, and for the dead. Then follows the Collect:*

O God, you taught the hearts of your faithful people by the sending to them the light of your Holy Spirit; grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in His holy comfort. Through Christ our Lord. *R.* Amen.

V. Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

V. The Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil, and keep us in eternal life.
R. Amen.

V. Let us bless the Lord, alleluia, alleluia.

R. Thanks be to God, alleluia, alleluia.

V. And may the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

R. Amen.

EVENING PRAYER

Until the 25th of May: Joy to thee, O Queen of Heaven, alleluia. He whom thou wast meet to bear, alleluia. As he promised, hath arisen, alleluia. Pour for us to God thy prayer, alleluia.

V. Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia.

R. For the Lord has risen indeed, alleluia.

V. Let us pray. O God, who through the resurrection of Thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ didst vouchsafe to give joy to the world: grant, we beseech thee, that through His Mother, the Virgin Mary, we may obtain the joys of everlasting life. Through Christ our Lord. *R.* Amen.

From the 26th of May: **V.** The Angel of the Lord brought tidings to Mary.
R. And she conceived by the Holy Ghost.

V. Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

R. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death. Amen.

V. Behold the handmaid of the Lord.

R. Be it unto me according to thy word. **V.** Hail Mary... **R.** Holy Mary...

V. And the Word was made flesh.

R. And dwelt amongst us. **V.** Hail Mary... **R.** Holy Mary...

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

V. Let us pray. We beseech thee, O Lord, pour thy grace into our hearts, that as we have known the Incarnation of thy Son Jesus Christ by the message of an angel, so by his Cross and Passion we may be brought unto the glory of his Resurrection; through the same Christ our Lord. **R.** Amen.

V. O God, make speed to save me.

R. O Lord, make haste to help me.

V. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

R. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Alleluia!

HYMN

Come, Thou holy Paraclete,
And from Thy celestial seat
Send Thy light and brilliancy:

Father of the poor, draw near;
Giver of all gifts, be here;
Come, the soul's true radiancy.

Come, of comforters the best,
Of the soul the sweetest guest,
Come in toil refreshingly:

Thou in labour rest most sweet,
Thou art shadow from the heat,
Comfort in adversity.

O Thou Light, most pure and blest,
Shine within the inmost breast
Of Thy faithful company.

Where Thou art not, man hath nought;
Every holy deed and thought
Comes from Thy divinity.

What is soiled, make Thou pure;
What is wounded, work its cure;
What is parchèd, fructify;

What is rigid, gently bend;
What is frozen, warmly tend;
Strengthen what goes erringly.

Fill Thy faithful, who confide
 In Thy power to guard and guide,
 With Thy sevenfold mystery.

Here Thy grace and virtue send:
 Grant salvation to the end,
 And in Heav'n felicity. Amen.

The appointed Psalm(s) and Reading(s) follow:

1	Psalm 149	Job 23,1-12 John 1,43-end	15	46	Deuteronomy 32,1-14 1 John 3,11-end
2	104	Deuteronomy 19 1 Peter 2,11-end	16	139	Deuteronomy 32,15-47 1 John 4,1-6
3	66	Deuteronomy 21,22-end 1 Peter 3,1-12	17	130	Deuteronomy 33 1 John 4,7-end
4	118	Deuteronomy 24,5-end 1 Peter 3,13-end	18	48	Deuteronomy 16,9-15 (Gospel) John 7,37-39
5	45	Song of Solomon 4,16-end Revelation 3,14-end	19	139 v. 1-11	Ezekiel 36,22-28 Acts 2,22-38
6	121	Deuteronomy 26 1 Peter 4,1-11	20	127	Exodus 35,30-end Galatians 5,13-end
7	128	Deuteronomy 28,1-14 1 Peter 4,12-end	21	135	Numbers 11,16-29 1 Corinthians 2
8	15, 24	2 Samuel 23,1-5 Colossians 2,20-end	22	136	Numbers 27,15-end 1 Corinthians 3
9	8	2 Kings 2,1-15 Revelation 5	23	138	1 Kings 19,1-18 Matthew 3,13-end
10	102	Deuteronomy 29,2-15 1 John 1	24	145	Ezekiel 11,14-20 Matthew 10,1-20
11	85	Deuteronomy 30 1 John 2,1-17	25	97, 98	Micah 3,1-8 Ephesians 6,10-20
12	147 v. 1-12	Isaiah 61 Luke 4,14-21	26	104 v. 1-10	Ezekiel 1 Revelation 4
13	18	Deuteronomy 31,1-13 1 John 2,18-end	27	4	Job 7 Romans 4,1-12
14	36	Deuteronomy 31,14-end 1 John 3,1-10	28	7	Job 8 Romans 4,13-end

29	110, 111	Exodus 16,2-15 John 6,22-35	31	9	Job 11 Romans 6,1-14
30	23, 42, 43	Proverbs 9,1-5 Luke 9,11-17			

Each reading ends with these words:

V. This is the word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

MAGNIFICAT

Ant: I will not leave you orphans, alleluia; I go away, and come again unto you, alleluia, and your heart shall rejoice, alleluia.

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,+
my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour;*
he has looked with favour on his lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed;+
the Almighty has done great things for me*
and holy is his name.

He has mercy on those who fear him,*
from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm*
and has scattered the proud in their conceit,

Casting down the mighty from their thrones*
and lifting up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things*
and sent the rich away empty.

He has come to the aid of his servant Israel,*
to remember his promise of mercy,

The promise made to our ancestors,*
to Abraham and his children for ever.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, *
and to the Holy Spirit.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

Ant: I will not leave you orphans, alleluia; I go away, and come again unto you, alleluia, and your heart shall rejoice, alleluia.

V. Let us pray. – *Intercessions* are offered for the Church, for the Sovereign (world), for those in need, our Benefactors, and for the dead. Then the Collect is said:

O God, you taught the hearts of your faithful people by the sending to them the light of your Holy Spirit; grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in His holy comfort. Through Christ our Lord. **R.** Amen.

V. Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

All: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen.

V. Let us bless the Lord, alleluia, alleluia.

R. Thanks be to God, alleluia, alleluia.

V. And may the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. **R.** Amen.

Optional private prayer to be said after Evening Prayer: To the Most Holy and undivided Trinity, to our Lord Jesus Christ Crucified, to the fruitful Virginity of the most blessed and most glorious Mary, always a Virgin, and to the holiness of all the Saints be ascribed everlasting praise, honour, and glory, by all creatures, and to us be granted the forgiveness of all our sins, world without end. Amen.

PRAYER FOR THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (NOVENA PRAYER)

O Lord Jesus Christ, All: Who, before ascending into heaven, didst promise to send the Holy Ghost to finish Thy work in the souls of Thy Apostles and Disciples, deign to grant the same Holy Spirit to me, that He may perfect in my soul the work of Thy grace and Thy love. Grant me the Spirit of Wisdom that I may despise the perishable things of this world and aspire only after the things that are eternal; the Spirit of Understanding to enlighten my mind with the light of Thy divine truth; the Spirit of Counsel that I may ever choose the surest way of pleasing God and gaining Heaven; the Spirit of Fortitude that I may bear my cross with Thee, and that I may overcome with courage all the obstacles that oppose my salvation; the Spirit of Knowledge that I may know God and know myself and grow perfect in the science of the Saints; the Spirit of Piety that I may find the service of God sweet and amiable; the Spirit of Fear that I may be filled with a loving reverence towards God, and may dread in any way to displease Him. Amen.

Ascension-tide customs

Pageantry — The Ascension was originally the occasion of long processions that culminated at the top of a hill. Over time, the processions waned and were replaced by pageants, reenactments of Christ's ascending into Heaven. The "pageant" could be as simple as a priest raising a crucifix when he read during the proclamation of the Gospel the verse "*He was taken up into Heaven*" or, at the same verse, the extinction (and removal) of the Easter Candle. In churches with a hole in the ceiling, a statue of Jesus would be hoisted up by ropes and disappear from sight as the people below raised their hands longingly towards it.

Novena — The Novena to the Holy Spirit begins on Ascension Day. Between the Lord's ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit, the disciples "*joined in continuous prayer, together with several women, including Mary the mother of Jesus*" (Acts 1,14). This is the true origin of this novena as a practice in Christian piety, one of the earliest forms of intercessory prayer. You can use the prayer on the previous page daily, over these nine days.

Food — It was once a custom in Europe, especially in England, to eat fowl on Ascension Day because Christ "flew" to Heaven. Pheasants, partridges, pigeons, and even crows found their way to the dinner table. Bakers in western Germany made delicious pastries for the occasion in the shape of various birds. Finally, there is a first-fruits tradition for Ascension Thursday. In some parts of France, apple fritters are a popular choice.

Dos and Don'ts — The English once kept this day with games, dancing, and horse races, while in Central Europe, the idea was to picnic on a high place by hiking there. Mountain-climbing was therefore a yes, but swimming was a big no-no; you were more likely to drown on Ascension Thursday than on any other day. Similar misfortunes awaited anyone who on this holy day worked in field or garden or sewed anything, for any clothing that has been touched by a needle on the Ascension will attract lightning and kill the wearer. Such superstitions were the residues of old pagan fears.

These silly beliefs, however, point to something true that is easily forgotten in our own days of phrenetic work, namely, that the Ascension is, in a certain sense, the greatest Feast of Our Lord insofar as it is the supreme glorification of Christ Jesus. If it is important enough to attract the attention of devils, it should be important enough to attract our attention as well and celebrate it with great solemnity, reverence, and joy. Keep holy the Ascension: take off work if you can, assist at Mass, and eat something really delicious!

From the Book of Common Prayer

5th Sunday after Easter: *O LORD, from whom all good things do come: Grant to us thy humble servants, that by thy holy inspiration we may think those things that be good, and by thy merciful guiding may perform the same; through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.*

The Lord God who is our Creator and Sustainer provides us in the created order with “all good things” for our bodily and material needs. Further, the same the Lord our God, who is our Saviour and King, provides for us in the ministries of holy mother Church with “all good things” for our eternal salvation. In the light of such plenteous provision for body and soul, it is the vocation of his creatures, who are his adopted children, to think and to do what pleases him. This they can do by the presence and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and through the growth of the word of God in their hearts. Further, by the merciful guidance of the same Spirit they are also able to perform good works, as faith works by love, to glorify their heavenly Father.

This Sunday is also called Rogation Sunday for the week following contains the Three Rogation Days, being the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday before Holy Thursday, or the Feast of the Ascension of our Lord.

If we follow the old tradition of the *Ecclesia Anglicana* (& the western Catholic Church) and of the reformed Church of England, then we receive the three days immediately before the Feast of the Ascension as both Rogation Days and as days of fasting and abstinence in preparation for this Festival, which crowns the other festivals of our Lord.

If we are going to have a Harvest Festival in the Autumn then we should also have Rogation-tide [*supplication to God for fruitful seasons and a good harvest*] in the Spring. And, if we are to prepare rightly to celebrate the Ascension of our Lord, we need to fast before the festival. So we ought to fast and pray on the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

The origin of these Rogation Days seems to be an order by the Bishop of Vienne about AD 470 after an earthquake that special litanies be offered for God’s care and protection, asking for provision by the God of heaven and of earth of the fruit of the earth. The custom spread through Gaul, to England and to Rome. In England the custom was required by Canon 16 of the Council of Clovesho in 747.

It was continued through the Reformation in England so that we find Queen Elizabeth in 1559 by Royal Injunction requiring the restoration of a perambulation of the parish boundaries/fields to pray for a good harvest; and there appeared in the official *Book of Homilies* (1562) “An Homily for the Days of Rogation Week”, divided into three parts for the 3 days of Rogation Week.

And it is followed by “An exhortation to be spoken to such parishes where they use their perambulation in Rogation Week for the oversight and limits of their town.” This was written by Archbishop Parker. When there was no walking around the boundaries of the parish, the Litany from the Book of Common Prayer was sung in church.

A serious proposal made by Bishop Cosin of Durham in 1661 to put a Collect, Epistle (James 5,13-18), and Gospel (Luke 11,1-10) for Rogation in the new edition of the Book of Common Prayer, that of 1662, was not followed through. However, the Collect he wrote provides an insight into how this period of intercession and abstinence was viewed by the faithful then: *Almighty God, Lord of heaven and earth, in whom we live, move and have our being, who does good unto all men, making thy sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sending rain on the just and the unjust; favourably behold us thy people, who do call upon thy name, and send us thy blessing from heaven, in giving us fruitful seasons, and filling our hearts with food and gladness; that both our hearts and mouths may be continually filled with thy praises, giving thanks to thee in thy holy Church, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Though it was not made part of the Book of Common Prayer, this beautiful Collect can, and indeed should, be used by the faithful in their private prayers during Rogation-tide.

Let us be fully aware that the members of the Church militant on earth need to be fed both by the fruit of the earth (thus the need for supplication in Rogation and thanksgiving at Harvest) and by the gifts, graces, virtues, and characteristics of the Lord Jesus Christ, who ascends into heaven to be our exalted Prophet, Priest, and King. The week containing Holy Thursday and the three Rogation Days is thus very important within the Christian Year and for Christian fruitfulness.

The Rev'd Dr Peter Toon (+2009)

Ascension-tide prayer from the Mozarabic Liturgy — O Jesus! the power and wisdom of God! who coming down from heaven for our sake and for our salvation, deignedst to clothe thyself in human flesh, that, by a most merciful union, thou mightest clothe us with thy divinity, and that, by ascending into heaven, thou mightest enrich with immortality the mortality thou assumedst by descending upon our earth: grant, we beseech thee, by the merit of this day's solemnity, (whereon we rejoice at and desire to imitate thine Ascension) that we may acknowledge the favour of this most loving dispensation, by paying to thy mercy the only homage in our power, the offering of our praise; and awaiting thy second coming which is to console us with joys eternal.

Pentecost and the Blessed Virgin Mary

*a sermon preached by Fr. Peter M.J. Stravinskias
on the Vigil of Pentecost, 7 June 2019, at Seton Hall University, New Jersey*

We find ourselves at the conclusion of the novena to the Holy Spirit, in preparation for the great feast of Pentecost. What I would like to do today is to say a few words about what the Holy Spirit did for one particular woman, for it was the Holy Spirit Who made Mary both Mother of Jesus and Mother of the Church.

All of Mary's greatness as a Christian can be traced to the fact that the Holy Spirit came upon her, and that she lived in the presence of God, continuously aware of His presence in her life. Our Lady cooperated with the Spirit's promptings in loving obedience to God's Word, daily renewing her "*be it unto me according to thy word*" of the Annunciation. Mary the Virgin heeded the Lord's plan for her and thus became fruitful. Her life was an ongoing Magnificat; she was a woman of peace and joy because she gave the Spirit of God free rein in her life.

When Mary experienced the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, she did not keep Him to herself; she immediately went forth to share that experience and its meaning with others. She also realized that a life in the Spirit necessarily involves service to others; therefore, not considering her own precarious situation, she went through the rough hill country to tend to the needs of her elderly cousin, Elizabeth.

What does all this have to do with you and me?

A great deal, for what happened in the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary can and must happen in our own lives. Each of us has received the Holy Spirit in Baptism and Confirmation, but what have we done with the Spirit? Are we more peaceful, more loving, more joyous for having received those sacraments? If not, the fault is not in the sacraments but in ourselves, that we have not activated the power of the Spirit in our lives.

Looking forward to tomorrow's birthday of the Church, on the great Feast of Pentecost, we cast our glance on the first and greatest Christian who ever lived, knowing that what the Spirit did for Mary, He will do only too gladly for every one of us. Today I would suggest taking some time out for a test to see whether or not we are a Spirit-filled person. The question is very simple: What have I done with the gifts the Spirit of God has given to you? Jesus said, "*By their fruits you will know them*" (Mt 7,16). We know the fruit Our Lady brought forth, for every day we say: "*Blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.*" Have I brought forth Christ to the world in which I live?

How do the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, received in Baptism and renewed in Confirmation, manifest themselves in my life?

Wisdom — Do I see God at work in my life and in the world? For the wise person, the wonders of nature, historical events, and the ups and downs of our lives take on deeper meaning. Wisdom sees God as our Father and so it treats others with dignity. It also sees God in everyone and everything.

Understanding — Do I understand the need to live as a follower of Christ? A person with understanding is not confused by all the conflicting messages in our culture about the right way to live and searches for an ever deeper apprehension of truth.

Counsel (Right Judgment) — Do I know the difference between right and wrong? and do I choose to do what is right? A person with right judgment avoids sin and lives out the values taught by Jesus.

Fortitude (Courage) — With the gift of fortitude/courage, we overcome our fear and are willing to take risks as a follower of Jesus Christ. Am I willing to stand up for what is right in the sight of God, even if it means accepting rejection, verbal abuse, or even physical harm and death? The gift of courage allows people the firmness of mind that is required both in doing good and in enduring evil.

Knowledge — With the gift of knowledge, we understand the true meaning of God and how it must transform us.

Piety (Reverence) — Do I have a deep sense of respect for God, the church, all things sacred? A person with reverence recognizes our total reliance on God and comes before God with humility, trust, and love.

Fear of the Lord (Wonder and Awe) — Am I aware of the glory and majesty of God? Do I recognize that God is the perfection of all our desires: perfect knowledge, perfect goodness, perfect power, and perfect love? Does this recognition show itself in my life? This gift is also the gift of fear of separating oneself from God. This fear is a “filial fear,” like a child’s fear of losing or offending his father, rather than a “servile fear,” that is, a fear of punishment.

It is a loving and spiritually edifying exercise to meditate on these gifts in the life of Our Blessed Lady and to pray to God, especially in the month of May, that through Mary’s prayers and example, our lives may be transformed and re-shaped by the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

As we enter spiritually into the Upper Room with Mary and the apostolic college, we gain confidence in a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon us and upon God’s Holy Church – because we, like those first disciples, are united in prayer with the Mother of Christ, who is also our Mother in the order of grace.

The Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary and the solving of (inter)personal problems

by Tom Hoopes

Got someone driving you crazy? Try to pray the Glorious Mysteries of the Holy Rosary!

Prayer isn't ultimately about changing God's will — it's about changing ours. And that's what I really like about the Glorious Mysteries. I chose to pray it as a Novena, that is once daily over nine consecutive days, but you must feel free to find the form that suits your needs and circumstances. The important thing is to pray the Five Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary, and to pray them for that (inter)personal issue that is so painful in your life.

The interpersonal issue could be any of the thorny problems we face: the family issues life inevitably brings, pitting “father against son and son against father;” workplace issues from unemployment to over-work; poisonous climate and gossip in workplace or in our churches; or your ruinous run-ins with your next door neighbour.

Remember: during the Holy Rosary we pray *with* Mary but we pray *to* God, while we meditate on the life of the Lord Jesus, finding strength, hope, and consolation in our Saviour's life and work.

Pray the first mystery, the Resurrection, for faith that nothing is impossible for God.

The problems we face can look insolubly difficult. But so can the problem of Jesus Christ being rejected by his followers, sentenced to death before a cheering crowd, and buried for three days.

“Faith” is often listed as the fruit of the first glorious mystery, and faith is the first thing you need to face your problem: Faith that Jesus Christ, whose Resurrection changed all of human history, is powerful enough to create a change in your life, too.

Pray the second mystery, the Ascension, for the fortitude to do what is necessary to solve your problem.

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me,” Jesus said before he ascended to heaven. But he didn't follow that with “therefore, leave everything to me.” Instead, he said: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them ... [and] teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.”

God usually doesn't solve problems without our involvement. He wants us to act: to confront who needs to be confronted, explain what needs

to be explained, and risk what needs to be risked. But he also adds: “*And lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.*”

Pray in the third mystery, the Descent of the Holy Spirit, that the same Spirit will be your partner as you face your problem.

The Holy Spirit is the solver par excellence of interpersonal issues, discouragement, and miscommunication. At Pentecost, he united the fractured Apostles, turned them from cowards into heroes, and allowed them to communicate with a vast array of people from different circumstances who “*didn't speak the same language,*” both literally and figuratively.

I have been surprised over the years how true it is that the Holy Spirit will “*teach you what to say.*” This happens in obvious ways, when I pray for words and get them; and in less obvious ways, when I am muddled and tongue-tied but he helps others hear me anyway. It's no wonder that the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are all about judging situations rightly and reacting appropriately — and are exactly what you need.

Pray the fourth mystery, the Assumption, that it will reset your priorities.

I was going through the Glorious Mysteries this way, focusing in on how its lessons directly apply to my intention — when along came the Assumption, which isn't about life on earth, but about life in heaven. Our Lady goes to heaven, body and soul, in what the Catechism calls “a sign of certain hope” for us. Then it dawned on me: We pray to improve our lives with others here and now. What God wants is a better life for all involved hereafter. We start out praying that certain crosses in our lives will disappear; God responds by inspiring us to carry whatever crosses will lead ourselves and others to a life with him.

Pray the fifth mystery, the coronation of Mary, and leave everything with her.

Imagine your mother was given the power to direct the operations of every area of your life: family and workplace, social life and love life. She would definitely look out for you and strive to make problems that irk you disappear. But she would also probably direct things in the way that she thinks best, even if you disagree. This is, of course, exactly the position we are in with Mary. She is the Queen of Heaven and Earth, a powerful intercessor with God himself, and she is our mother. If we invite her intercession into the circumstances of our life, she will look out for us just like our mom would. She will make life easier in many ways, more difficult in certain ways, and better for us in every way.

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Addressing the lies of transgenderism with truth, charity, and the Eucharist

Our families are under spiritual attack. The targets? Youth and young adults. Not only is it more challenging nowadays to find positive role models to foster a healthy self-image for young people today, it is increasingly difficult to decipher between what is truth and falsehood.

How did we get here? Where do you go from here? Is there hope? Catholic author and speaker Jason Evert provides clarity in his new book *Male, Female, Other?*, which addresses the current controversy surrounding gender with both insight and charity. Evert presents a question, objections to it, responses to the objections, claims for its accuracy, and further proof—scientific, spiritual, psychological—that shines divine light on a topic weighed down by tension, confusion, and untruth.

Evert recently spoke with *Catholic World Report* about his book, his motivations for writing it, and his counsel for young people and their families who are searching for answers.

CWR: There are a number of existing books and resources for those who identify as transgender. What motivated you to write your book?

Evert: In my travels to speak at parishes and schools around the world, I encountered many parents, educators, and clergy who felt blindsided by the number of young people wrestling with this question of gender and who felt that they lacked adequate resources to respond to the topic with charity and clarity. I also met many young people experiencing gender dysphoria who didn't feel that there was space for them in the Church to explore their questions about identity. So, I wanted to create a resource that would fill this niche.

CWR: What are the lies that young people who are struggling with transgenderism today innocently, yet erroneously, believe about themselves?

Evert: The main lie they are told is that they might need to hurt their bodies to be their authentic selves. A second lie is that if they fail to live up to gender stereotypes, they are somehow disqualified from being that particular sex. A final lie is that transitioning will provide the relief that they so desperately seek. In reality, the suicide rate of those who undergo sex reassignment surgeries soars to 19 times higher than the general population within ten years of the procedure.

CWR: Conversely, what would you say are three core truths that young people today need to know about themselves?

Evert: One important truth is that their bodies are not meaningless, but meaningful. A second truth is that the Church loves them, sees them, knows that they did not choose to feel this distress, and will walk with them in love through this difficult experience. A final truth is that although feeling distress about one's sexual identity is not uncommon, gender dysphoria in children typically resolves 80-95 percent of the time on its own by the end of puberty.

CWR: If you were to have dinner today with a young person who says they are “transgender”, what words of advice would you give?

Evert: As much as I might be tempted to lead in with advice, I think the most important posture we ought to take is one of listening. Granted, they deserve the truth, and they need to hear it. But I think it's equally important for them to know that the Church is listening. They're not necessarily looking for someone who has all the answers, but for someone who will walk with them in love to find the truth. So, it's not primarily about winning a debate by showing them evidence from chromosomes. It's more about listening to gender dysphoria with reverent curiosity, discovering how these deep aches can often reveal the path toward healing their unmet needs and sometimes trauma.

CWR: For families who are struggling with one or more children who suffer from gender dysphoria, what first step would you advise them to take?

Evert: If your child reveals to you that he or she is struggling with this, thank them for sharing this with you, and explain how you understand that it must have been frightening to reveal that. Then, without interrogating them, ask them thoughtful questions that help you (and them) better understand what they're feeling. Don't get hung up over strange words like “non-binary,” but invite them to explain what they mean by those words. Oftentimes, this new language offers them a vocabulary that resonates with their lived experience. If we simply try to debunk their faulty anthropology, they'll pull away and assume we don't understand them. But, if we can listen well, they will care more about what we have to say. Then, gently guide them toward the truth using the resources at our website: <https://chastity.com/gender/>

CWR: Do you see a connection between the power of the Eucharist and its effect on those who suffer from gender dysphoria? How can the Eucharist heal?

Evert: The message of the Eucharist is “*This is my body, given up for you.*” When a person wrestling with gender dysphoria experiences distress over his or her body, but chooses to trust God and walk with him through the healing journey, they live out these very words of the Mass in a profound way. God alone knows the suffering each person has experienced, and He is the one who always accepts each of us, even when we don’t accept ourselves. This unconditional love is awaiting each of us in the Eucharist.

CWR: The Eucharist is the “source and summit of the Christian life”. In your role as a husband, father, author, and Catholic speaker, how has the Eucharist transformed your life?

Evert: I began the devotion of going to daily Mass when I was in high school, and have made this a priority in my life ever since then. Through this, I learned the truth of what Saint John Paul II declared when he said, “Help us, Jesus, to understand that in order ‘to do’ in your Church, also in the field of the new evangelization that is so urgently needed, we must first learn ‘to be’, that is, to stay with you, in your sweet company, in adoration.” And in his encyclical on the Eucharist and the Church, he wrote: “Were we to disregard the Eucharist, how could we overcome our own deficiency?”

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Some fundamental teachings of the Church about human person

- Every human being has been created in the image and likeness of God and has inestimable value and dignity. No one should be an object of scorn, hatred, or violence for any reason, including those who seek gender transition or who refuse to identify as either male or female.
- The Church teaches that God created us, male and female, and that our bodies, souls, and identities as male and female are all integral to who we are as human persons.
- Biological sex and the socio-cultural role of sex (gender) can be distinguished but not separated. Because gender and sex are so connected, there can only be two.
- Our body matters. It is part of God’s gift to us in creation. We are inescapably a unity of body and soul. Our bodies express the reality of who we are as persons. We are not just somethings; we are “someones”—and our bodies testify to this.
- Our bodies also witness to our capacity to give ourselves as gifts. When we give our bodies, we give ourselves.

A Christian response to Gender Identity Theory

In the UK, the number of young people seeking gender transition rose by almost 1,900% between 2010 and 2020. In the midst of this shifting landscape, it is the duty of the Church to proclaim what she understands as truth revealed by God.

I. *The Truth and Dignity of the Human Person* — The first chapters of Genesis provide the foundation for our understanding of the human person. We believe human beings are made in the image and likeness of God. We are set apart from the rest of creation because we uniquely are called to share, by knowledge and love, in God’s own life. There are two sexes (not less, not more): male and female, clearly distinct between themselves. There can not exist a human person without being either male or female and no one can be both. Sex (maleness and femaleness) are such integral part of us, as person, that they cannot be changed from one to the other.

Genesis also clearly teaches us that every human being is a unity of body and soul. Every human person is willed by God, and our bodies share in the dignity of being created in God’s image. The human body is a gift, good and willed by God. Its dignity and importance is also clear from various fundamental elements of our faith: Christ’s Incarnation, his sacrifice on the Cross, the Eucharist, and our own future resurrection in body.

Because of the profound unity of body and soul, being male or female are inseparably linked to our body. In other words: No one can be male or female *regardless* their body. Our body, our chromosomes, our cells and organs clearly state if a person is male or female.

II. *Gender Identity Theory* — The above understanding of the human person is at odds with gender identity theory. According to this model: 1) a person is male or female based not on their bodies (chromosomes, etc.) but on self-perception; 2) this can change during a person’s life.

The term ‘transgender’ has become of common usage and indicates a separation between “gender” (man or woman) from biological sex (male or female). According to this theory, one can, for example, be born as man (with male reproductive organs, male chromosomes, etc.) but *feel* or *identify* as female. Still according to gender theory, this feeling or self-identification is more important and somehow more objective and should be the decisive element as to whether that person is male or female. Christian theology, however, states that it is our body, and not how we feel about it, that clearly manifests what we are.

III. Transition — The process usually has four stages (for young people): 1) social transition, 2) puberty blockers, 3) hormone therapy, 4) surgeries. Social transition includes adopting the name, pronouns, facilities used, clothing, and appearance that align with the subjective sense of gender. Puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones, and surgeries are all aspects of medical transition. To some, social transition may seem benign, even humane and kind, such as using someone's preferred pronouns and actively affirming his or her perceived gender. However, while well-intentioned, this kind of endorsement may encourage a young person onto a path of unnecessary medicalization. Social transition is often the first step toward hormones and surgery.

The process of medical transition for young people with gender incongruence often begins with puberty blockers that disrupt the process of sexual maturation. Recent medical research has shown the irreversible damage this causes. Since it can often lead to permanent sterility and ongoing harm to the body, it is incompatible with Catholic medical ethics as well as Catholic anthropology.

IV. Consequences — Proponents of gender theory believe that transition procedures will lead to better psychological outcomes and an increased quality of life. However, one of the few robust, long-term studies available found that individuals who have undergone medical transition have a rate of suicidality that is 19 times higher than the general population.

V. Gender dysphoria — Gender dysphoria is a real condition and is the feeling of discomfort or distress that might occur in people whose gender identity (how they identify themselves) differs from their sex assigned at birth (based on their body). It is a real, psychological pain and all those who experience it must be treated with the utmost kindness and charity and must be spared any judgement or discrimination. Any condemnation, discrimination or attack on a trans person or on a person with gender dysphoria is not only rightly punishable by law but would be a grievous sin! While Christians can and must point out the falsity of gender theories from a (natural) scientific, philosophical, and theological point of view, they must show charity and compassion to every person without any distinction.

Gender dysphoria being a real condition, it calls for proper treatment. This treatment often was the above described transition. However, some countries have conducted a systematic review of all available evidence and concluded that the supposed benefits of medicalization and surgery for gender dysphoric youth do not outweigh the known, very serious risks. Sweden, Finland, France, and the UK among others are now prioritizing psychotherapeutic interventions.

VI. Whole-Person Affirmation — A response to gender identity theory that is both truthful and loving cannot end with simply stating what we should not do. We must offer a positive vision of the human person and a path of accompaniment for gender-questioning persons and their families.

A Catholic approach must offer the affirmation of the entire person: body and soul. It begins by affirming the belovedness of every person. The first and most important truth that each person needs to hear is this: *you are infinitely loved*. You are a living, breathing icon of God, and in this very moment, God is willing your existence, because he delights in you.

Whole-person affirmation also affirms the goodness of the body. Our body reveals who we are. This is not something we need to force the body to do; the body is always doing it. Our thoughts, emotions, etc. are all expressed by means of our body and it could not be otherwise.

On the other hand, a truthful view of the body also acknowledges its burdens. Being a body is difficult and painful at times. The silver lining, if you will, is that the limits and vulnerabilities of a body reveal our dependence on one another and ultimately on God, and our need for his healing.

VII. Gender, sex, and stereotypes — Theology and gender theory agrees on the fact that gender (man or woman) can be distinguished from sex (male or female). Where they disagree is that according to the Christian view of a person gender cannot be separated from sex. That said, it is also important to point out that gender stereotypes change with time and culture, and rightly so. Even more importantly, we must remember that every human person is a masterpiece of the Creator. There is no one “right way” to be a boy or girl, a man or a woman.

Each person is a man/boy or a woman/girl (gender) based on their sex (male or female according to their body at birth), at the same time each individual is unique and should be encouraged to discern and develop their distinct gifts and singular personalities. The Catholic tradition is rich with saints and exemplars who lived out the vocation to love in myriad ways, and some of them did not conform with the gender stereotypes and norms of their time. Rejecting stereotypes is not problematic in itself.

Whole-person affirmation also affirms the need for accompaniment. Accompaniment is a commitment to walk alongside someone and is characterized by the “art of listening,” listening that is respectful and compassionate. It requires great patience and “docility to the Spirit,” as well as humility—an awareness of our own limits—and reverence for the ultimate mystery within each person that only God can fully know.

The Psalms

Psalm 37: "Commit your ways to the Lord"

Trust in God and in his providence is the main theme of Psalm 37. Not in a naive way. David acknowledges many of the difficult tests our trust in God is put to: the existence of evil, the behaviour of the wicked, poverty and afflictions, fear, doubts, or weariness. Psalm 37 attempts to be a guide for the godly to still navigate safely, amidst all these obstacles, towards a perfect trust in God.

Psalm 37 is not a theological textbook. It is not interested in theories, elaborate theological explanations, or doctrines. Rather, it offers a very pastoral approach with real-life advice. Unlike other psalms, Psalm 37 is almost a collection of wisdom-sayings. Its greatest value perhaps is that it testifies to the calm serenity and assuredness of a faith which has been tested in the course of many struggles, and the strengths of which resides in its simplicity.

Verses 1 - 7 — The first verses reflect the conviction of David that the sinner, because he rebels against God, simply *cannot* last. It is part of a faith in a God who sees and judges everything from the prospect of eternity. The sinner is like the grass that speedily fades away. It would, in fact, be only a sign of faint-heartedness and lack of trust if the godly were to anticipate hastily the decision which belongs to God alone.

The two consequences of such a trust are outlined clearly by the Psalm. Firstly, the godly should not be moved to anger or lose his temper over the sins of the wicked. The things that are not under our control must be left confidently in God's hands. Secondly, the godly need to take due care that he faithfully fulfils the task which is allotted to *him*, and does so in the time and space assigned to him. In other words, the sin of others neither gives us the right to sin, nor does it absolve us from our own duty of godly life.

As a source of consolation and strength, the just man is reminded in turn that he may cast all cares, worries, or uncertainties on God. God's ways will prevail and the man who is certain about the coming of the day can in no way be frightened by the darkness of the night. Knowing this, the just can now be still and wait with confidence for God.

Verses 8 - 15 — David now approaches the same theme but from a different angle, outlining the dangers that befall the just man if he gives space to anger and wrath because of the wicked; for such behaviour tends to evil.

Even a seemingly righteous indignation over the sinner would put the just into the same mindset of the sinner himself. Psalm 37 points out that such behaviour would also be very silly. After all, what the sinners possess, isn't it only a short lifetime at the end of which they are threatened by destruction while, on the other hand, what the godly may expect is the fulfilment of promises and joy in the consummation of their salvation?! God can but laugh at the wicked; why should then he who has faith take a tragic view of something which God thinks worth only laughing at?

Indeed, sin is already in itself judgement and the weapon of sin at the end always turns against the sinner himself and breaks in pieces in his own hand. The prophet Hosea says that God who sits in judgement is at work in the decay which is brought about by sin.

Verses 16 - 20 — These verses offer advice to the godly poor who see and do not understand the good sort of the wicked and speak in more detail of God's care for those who fear him. David admits that hardship still afflict the godly but they are not shuttered thereby.

Verses 21 - 22 — Now David talks about how the blessing of God inspires the righteous to acts of generosity and helpfulness expressed in joyful giving. It is God's promises and blessing that truly enriches the godly while the wicked, through his own dishonesty in matters of money, brings curse on himself.

Verses 23 - 31 — The following verses of Psalm 37 affront the difficult question of suffering and the fact that even the godly man, who is under the guidance of God, is not always spared adversity. Though David here does not reach the theological heights of Isaiah 53 or Psalm 73, and continues to wrestle with the problem of evil that befalls the godly just as the majority of the Old Testament, he is not wrong in saying that the godly man, though he may fall, is nevertheless not cast down for ever, because God even then still upholds him. God is at work in adversity, too. Finally, a deeply true conclusion is drawn: the just man will live righteously not to secure a tranquil life for himself but because of God who loves justice.

Verses 32 - 40 — The final verses speak again how the just is in God's hands notwithstanding the persecutions suffered from the wicked. The just man is exhorted to wait patiently for the Lord and to walk in his ways—one day he shall see the destruction of the wicked. This is not vindictiveness; on the contrary, the providential rule of God, which was obscured by the affliction of the just, will once more made manifest to the wicked. God will be glorified because his promise will come true.

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Parish Hall & Activities

*With enquires about **hiring the Parish Hall, joining the Munch Club or the Choir**, please, contact the Parish Office.*

A priest is always available for Confession, spiritual direction, or for a simple chat half an hour before every Service, or at any other time by appointment! For service times and other information about our churches and services (including weddings and funerals), please visit our website:

www.stpaulsweymouth.org