

Weekly Newsletter During the Covid-19 Pandemic 14th June 2020

Joint Parishes of St Joseph's and St Wilfrid's Gateshead

Parish Priest Canon Michael Brown

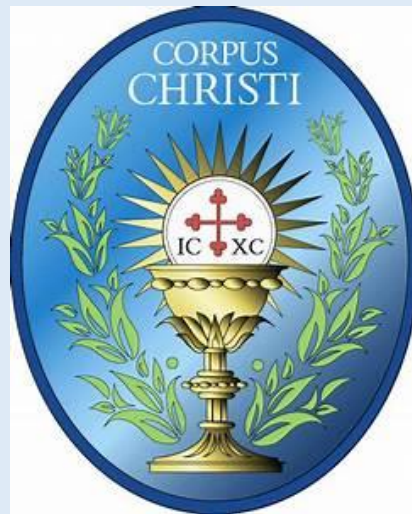
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Today is The Feast of Corpus Christy



(OF) Readings for today are: -

First Reading	Deuteronomy 8:2-3 14-16
Responsorial Psalm	Psalms 147 12-13 14-15 19-20
Second Reading	1 Corinthians 10:16-17
Alleluia	John 6: 51
Gospel	John 6:51-56

“I Am The Bread of Life”

The Catholic Church is not a building, nor an institution, nor a book of rules, nor a Creed. Although all these are important, the Catholic Church is first and foremost a family: brothers and sisters of Jesus: sons and daughters of God; a community of love.

Every family has a table where we celebrate ‘being family’, especially at times of celebration: birthdays, anniversaries, new jobs, new life, we raise our wine glass and say
“many happy returns”

In every celebration there are three elements: a past, a present, a future.

When we celebrate, we recall a past event, (the day of birth, the wedding day) and we bring that past event into the present as we remember, re-call to mind the past, (how good the best man’s speech was, how beautiful the bride looked, how it felt the first time we held that new life in our arms), the past event becomes present with us. There is also a third element; the future, we look forward “many happy returns”, meaning: “we will do this again next year and the year after and the year after that, we look forward”.

In every celebration there is a past, a present and a future.

The whole teaching of the Eucharist revolves around those three realities: the past is called to mind and so made present in the here and now and the future is in the promise made by Jesus.

How does all of this happen?

The night before He died, at the last supper, Jesus offered His death to His Father. He even showed His disciples the kind of death He would suffer. Taking bread He said “This is My Body which will be given up for you” and taking the cup He said “This is My blood which will be shed for you”, He showed them that He would die through the shedding of His blood. But Mass is not just a memorial, it is a

Real Presence.



How is Christ Really and Truly present?

The key to understanding the Real Presence is the Resurrection, the risen body is a new creation, it is not limited by time and space. The priest does not make Christ present, nor call Him down from Heaven, He is already present to the whole of creation. Through bread and wine, the risen Jesus makes Himself present on the Altar. In Holy Communion we receive the risen and glorified body of Christ, at Mass we are present with Mary Magdalene in the garden that first Easter morning. Easter Day is a permanent reality for Christ, He lives in an everlasting now, Mass is therefore the joyful celebration of Christ's victory over death. Holy Mass is the memorial of Calvary and the reality of Easter.

Finally, The Eucharist is a promise of our future glory, "Whoever eats this bread will live for ever, and I will raise him up at the last day". We elevate the chalice at Mass, raising our glasses with the greeting "many happy returns" meaning "You will come again Lord"

When Jews in exile celebrate the Passover they always turn and face Jerusalem, ending the Passover meal with the words "next year in Jerusalem", that is their great wish: to celebrate with family and friends in the promised land. It is our wish also, we who are exiles in this vale of tears, recall a promise made by Jesus that our family will one day be together in Heaven, the promised land, our future home.

Every Communion is the pledge of our own resurrection, we sit at the table of the Risen lord: the sign and promise of the Feast of Heaven.

Summed up by St Thomas Aquinas in his great anthem "O Sacrum Convivium" set to music by Mozart

"O Sacred meal in which Christ is received, the memory of His passion is recalled, and the promise of future Glory is given to us"

Past, Present, Future



2nd Sunday After Pentecost

(E) Readings for today are: -

Introit	Psalm 17:19-20
Epistle 1	John 3: 13-18
Gradual	Psalm 119: 1, 2
Gospel	Luke 14: 16-24

You're Invited...
(Luke 14: 16-24)

by Fr Anthony M. Coniaris

The master of the feast made doubly sure that the guests received the invitations. He issued two invitations to each: the first was to tell each one that he was invited; the second, on the day of the dinner, to announce that all was ready: "Come; for all is now ready. "

"Come!" The Gospel is not so much a command as an offer; not so much a demand as a gift - an invitation to share in the unbelievable joy of the kingdom.

"Come!" God is expecting you! He is ready for the poor, the maimed, the blind, the lame. He is ready for those who have spent their lives in the highways and byways of life. He invites all: "Come; for all is now ready. "

As a shepherd seeks for the lost sheep, as a woman gets down on her knees to look for a lost coin, as a father waits for the lost son to come home again, so God is ever seeking, calling, inviting.

"Come; for all is now ready. " Come you who seek meaning for life. Come you who hunger and thirst for righteousness. Come you who falter under the burden of sin and guilt. Come you who are anxious and fearful. Come you who mourn. Come you who seek peace and fulfilment. Come, "the table is richly laden. Fare ye royally on it. The calf is a fatted one. Let no one go away hungry... Enjoy ye all the riches of his goodness. Let no one mourn that he hath fallen again and chain; for forgiveness hath risen from the grave. Let no one fear death; for the death of our Saviour hath set us free. "

There are many people who consider Christianity a type of tyrannical religion. To them it is nothing but a series of commandments, you should do this. You should not do that. But Christianity is not first and foremost a "should" religion. It is first and foremost a "come" religion. The great drawing power of Christ is not in His "Thou shalt not" but in His "Come to me. " Come be filled with the Holy Spirit. Come be filled with the power of God's presence. If we come to Him, then we shall do certain things, not because we "should" do them, but because we delight in doing them as an expression of our love for Jesus.

Commenting on this word "Come" and on the words of Jesus "Come to me all you who labour..." St. Chrysostom wrote these precious words, "His invitation is one of kindness. His goodness is beyond description. 'Come to me all, ' not only rulers but also their subjects, not only the rich, but also the poor, not only the free but also the slaves, not only men but women, not only the young but also the old, not only those of sound body but also the maimed and those with mutilated limbs, all of you, He says, come! For such are the Master's gifts; He knows no distinction of slave and free, nor of rich and poor, but all such inequality is cast aside. 'Come, ' He says, 'all who labour and are burdened!'

"And see whom He calls! Those who have spent their strength in breaking the law, those who are burdened with their sins, those who can no longer lift up their heads, those who are filled with shame, those who can no longer speak out. And why does He call them? Not to demand an accounting, nor to hold court. But why? To relieve them of their pain, to take away their heavy burdens. "

When Jesus says, "Come, " He does not stand on the top rung of a long, high ladder in heaven to signal us to start climbing. For He Himself has climbed down the ladder to stand at our very elbows. He has come to us.

"For us people and for our salvation (He) came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit and of the virgin Mary and became man" (Nicene Creed). "She brought forth her first-born Son and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger. " He came, born in a stable. He came and died on the cross. He came to prepare the banquet of salvation for us. And now - today - He sends His servants to extend us His invitation: "Come, for all is now ready. "

Far from being accepted, this gracious invitation was rejected. "I have bought a field ... I have bought five yokes of oxen... I have married a wife... I cannot come. Have me excused ... " This was the response. Is it not the same response today? Our great tragedy is that we end up accepting the wrong invitations in life. We miss the banquet, the abundant life of Christ, and settle for the lesser, and the fleeting. And Jesus still laments, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem... How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not " (Matt 23 37).

"Come, for all is now ready. " "But" you object, "I am not worthy to come. My clothes are not suitable. I wouldn't know how to act in the Master's palace." None of this makes any difference. The invitation goes out to all. The good news is that you do not have to be perfect to come. Come as you are - with all your sins and sorrows, weaknesses and failures, problems, and anxieties. Come to the only One who can forgive you and heal you. Come to the only One who can make you worthy.

"Come, for all is now ready. " Coming to Jesus is a way of life. It begins with baptism. It involves daily commitment, repentance, obedience, worship, prayer, Bible reading, and regular communion. It involves a daily walk with Jesus. It involves not only "Come!" but also "Go!" "Go out into the world and be my disciples. Be servants. Be lights. Be salt."

None of us will ever know the wonder of the brightly lighted banquet hall, the goodness of the food, and the joy of being a part of this amazing fellowship unless we lay aside the excuses and dare to accept the invitation.

Come to Him now and be assured that on the last day He will direct to you the greatest "Come" of all; "Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

Prayer

Lord, I am coming. No excuses. No alibis. I know I am not worthy. Without You, I have lived as if I were blind and lame. I come hungry and thirsty. I come to be fed. Amen.



Opening Our Churches

The following 'pilot Churches' in the Diocese will be opening for private prayer from Monday 15th June, please consult the websites/newsletters/face-book pages of these parishes for further information about times and days of opening

- St Aidan's, Ashington
- St Mary's Cathedral, Newcastle
 - St Patrick's, Consett
 - St Mary's Sunderland
 - St Joseph's Hartlepool

The opening of our churches is no easy task and our Priests have been given guidance notes on how safe opening can begin to take place.

Canon Michael Brown is keen to be able to reopen his churches as soon as is practical and safe to do so.

However, we need to ask ourselves:

- Is there a need to open St Joseph's for prayer? We were never open during the day except for Mass before the coronavirus hit us!! We can only assess the need for the church to open for private prayer if you let us know your needs, please contact one of the email addresses or telephone Canon Michael to tell him of your needs.
- or do we wait to open church for the day when we can get back for socially distanced Mass?

Whichever it is we need to be prepared so Canon Michael needs to have the NAMES and CONTACT details of anyone willing to VOLUNTEER to help PREPARE the Churches prior to them opening.

There will also need to be USHERS throughout the time the church is open to ensure all safety measures and regulations are adhered to by those attending for prayer.

If you would like to volunteer in any way, please email

shaunadevitt@tiscali.co.uk

giving your name, contact details, your availability (days, times etc), and what role you are prepared to undertake. Please DO NOT bother Canon Michael with anything at this stage, Shauna Devitt will be liaising with him as to the viability and subsequent times of opening the churches safely through compiling a list of volunteers and cross referencing their availability etc.

PLEASE NOTE:

NO-ONE OVER AGE 70 (no matter how fit and active you are) or WITH ANY UNDERLYING HEALTH CONDITIONS or if PREGNANT can volunteer - sorry, but this is for your own safety and the Church has a 'Duty of Care' to each and every one of us.

It is hoped we will be able to return to Mass at the beginning of July, further information will be shared as soon as it is available.

Your continued patience, support and understanding are very much appreciated, and we ask that you continue to pray for the absolute best decisions to be made.



An Act of Spiritual Communion

When we are unable to receive Holy Communion, it has long been the catholic tradition to make an Act of Spiritual Communion.

St. Thomas Aquinas defined a Spiritual Communion as “an ardent desire to receive Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament and lovingly embrace Him as if we had actually received Him.”

One composed by St Alphonsus Ligouri in 1870 is: -

“My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.”

Act of Perfect Contrition

When we cannot get to confession the Catholic Church has made provision for our reconciliation with the Father through an Act of Perfect Contrition, Cardinal Vincent Nichols recently spoke these words, “What the Church teaches us, is that God in His mercy, forgives our sins when we are truly sorry for them. And when we turn to Him and express our sorrow in an Act of Contrition, it's called an Act of Perfect Contrition when its focus is on the mercy and the love of God rather than on the burden of our guilt. So to make an act of Perfect Contrition, we simply need to turn to God and be, as it were, overwhelmed by God's mercy, and then express in our own words or in the words of the traditional Act of Contrition, the sorrow we feel for our offences against the goodness of God. When we do that in all sincerity of heart, we may rest assured that God forgives our sins and that we come away from that Act of Perfect Contrition freed from those sins And, as I say, the only thing we have to remember is, when it is possible to make a Confession again, that we mention the grievous sins which were forgiven by this Perfect Act of Contrition.”

Thank You

To all those who have continued to make donations to Our Churches throughout the pandemic, a special thank you to the anonymous donor of £1,000 left at St Joseph's this week. Your support and sacrifice are very much appreciated, without your continued financial help our churches would not be able to survive.

If Anyone would like to continue with their weekly donations the details of how to do so are below: -

To donate via bank transfer:

Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle
Gateshead St Wilfrid's
Sort Code 40-34-18
Account Number 01164120

Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle
Gateshead St Joseph's
Sort Code 40-34-18
Account Number 31164066

Please use reference: - Weekly Income

OR

Donate using a cheque made out to either parish

'DHN St Joseph's Gateshead' or 'DHN St Wilfrid's Gateshead'

St Wilfrid's

Ford House

Sunderland Road

Gateshead NE8 3QR

St Joseph's

Presbytery

High West Street

Gateshead NE8 1LX

PLEASE REMEMBER

Our Parish Website and Facebook pages are updated regularly, and the Parish Newsletter is available on our website each week. Please remember also that the diocesan website www.rcdhn.org.uk and the Bishops' Conference website www.cbcew.org.uk contain many useful links that may be helpful to you at this time.

Keeping us updated with your contact information

During this time of social distancing and self-isolation, Canon Michael Brown has tried to keep in touch with as many parishioners as he can to offer support and comfort. He has been able to do this only with those parishioners for whom he holds up to date contact details.

Please ensure your contact details are correct. Use parish email addresses or telephone to update your information.

If you know of anyone from either Parish who cannot access this newsletter via the website and would like to receive it by email, please ask them to give their email address to Canon Michael Brown email michaelbrown6@btconnect.com or Shauna Devitt at shaunadevitt@tiscali.co.uk

Keeping in Touch

Do you know who your Catholic neighbours are? Do you know if there are other members of the parish living in the same street, or on the same estate as you? As members of the same parish community we have some things in common with one another, the main thing being our faith. As we cannot meet one another at Mass or even socially with a cup of coffee or tea in the Church Hall, how do we stay connected or in touch with one another as fellow parishioners when we are socially distancing? Coming to Mass each Sunday, or even during the week was a great spiritual act on our part, or part and parcel of living out our faith, but for many it was also a social event and enabled us to meet others, and in some cases go off for a tea or coffee together afterwards! All that has

disappeared because of Covid-19, and yet we are still members of the church, of a Faith family! Do you have any ideas that could be used to keep us in touch with one another? The Parish cannot share your contact details with anyone else ... unless you have given your permission to do so and even then it's usually for a very specific reason, e.g. parish ministries and volunteers lists, but would you like to know who else from the parish lives in the same area, the same local estate as you? Some people may be feeling quite isolated now and coming to church may have been their only contact with other people throughout the week. What can we do to try to keep in touch with these? Our current situation is going to last for some time, and it seems unlikely that as a church community we will get back to the old normal. When we do eventually open our churches for Mass, the social distancing rules are likely to still be imposed and that will make it difficult for us to socialise with others as we once did. As a church, how can we use this situation to help other members of our community, or even help ourselves? If you have any thoughts, please email. We cannot continue to do nothing as a church and just wait and pray for the time when we get back to normal.

Diocesan News

Live Streaming of Masses

The following parishes have set up a live stream of Mass. Please visit the links for more details:

St. Mary's Cathedral, Newcastle

[Cathedral's YouTube Channel](#). Each day at 12.00 noon (Sunday at 11.30am) Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and devotions live streamed at 5.00pm each day.

Our Lady of Mercy Parish, Sunderland

[YouTube channel](#). You can also find details and information on their [Facebook page](#).

Billingham, St. Thomas of Canterbury

[Facebook page](#), Mass daily at 12.00 noon, Exposition at 1.00pm and Benediction at 2.00pm.

Chester le Street, St. Cuthbert and Sacriston, St. Bede

A recording of daily Mass via their [Facebook Page](#).

Darlington, St. Augustine's

Sunday Mass at 9.15am via their [Facebook page](#).

St. Mary's, Hexham

Via their [website](#) or [YouTube channel](#). Sunday Mass 10.00am, weekday Mass 6.00pm and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament Sunday 4.00pm.

St. Paul's, Cramlington

[Facebook Page](#).

Stockton Family Parish

[Facebook Page](#).

Parish of Our Lady Star of the Sea

[Facebook Page](#), Mass daily at 9.30am.

Pope Video

The Pope Video is a monthly video with notes that highlights the Holy Father's monthly intentions for prayer. During this month of May the intention is for Deacons. Follow this link to watch and read. thepopevideo.org

Reflection For Extraordinary Ministers

There is a Reflection for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion by Fr Adrian Dixon on the Diocesan Website. We are fortunate at St Joseph's & St Wilfrid's in having several people who have been trained and commissioned to undertake this role of service in our communities.

Every year they are expected to undertake a time of reflection, usually a day organised by the Diocese, and then to renew their commitment to this ministry. This usually takes place at Mass on the Feast of Corpus Christi. As we are unable to attend Mass this year it is hoped that they find Fr Adrian Dixon's short Reflection a helpful resource.

Community Support

Gateshead Council have a dedicated page on their website offering a network of support for those who need help: -

<https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/15181/coronavirus-COVID-19-Community-support>

Or phone 01914333000

Alcoholics Anonymous Call free on 08009177650 or email help@aamail.org

As part of the pastoral care of parishioners and others during this time several qualified counsellors and listeners have generously made themselves available to anyone who may be troubled by the negative effect of the situation. These councillors and listeners can be contacted through St Mary's Cathedral Listening Service on 01912326953

European Union Citizens All EU, EEA and Swiss citizens living in the UK are required by the government to apply through its Settlement Scheme to continue living, working, and accessing services here. The deadline for applications is 30 June 2021. Details and links to the application process can be found at: gov.uk/eusettledstatus. Please bring this to the attention of friends, relatives and fellow parishioners who may need to apply. Assistance for those who may have difficulty applying is available at: gov.uk/help-eu-settlementscheme. The Catholic Church in England and Wales stands in solidarity with all European citizens who have made their homes here. They are a valued part of our parishes, schools, and communities.

Diocesan Day of Scripture Online If you have access to the internet you are invited to join a Day of Scripture, as part of the 2020 "Year of the Word" celebrations. It begins at 10am on 19th June and ends with "Imaginative Contemplation" at 7pm. More information / full daily programme is on the diocesan website.