

Weekly Newsletter During the Covid-19 Pandemic 31st May 2020

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

Parish Priest Canon Michael Brown

St Joseph's Presbytery High West Street Gateshead NE8 1LX

Telephone 01914771631

"As The Father sent Me, so I am sending you"



Know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time

Today is the Feast of Pentecost or Whit Sunday

Whit comes from White as traditionally today was a day on which adults would be baptized and they would come clothed in white – White Sunday/Whit Sunday

(OF) Readings for today are: -

<i>First Reading</i>	<i>Acts 2: 1-11</i>
<i>Responsorial Psalm</i>	<i>Psalm 103</i>
<i>Second Reading</i>	<i>1 Corinthians 12:3-7, 12-13</i>
<i>Alleluia</i>	<i>Sequence Holy Spirit Lord of Light</i>
<i>Gospel</i>	<i>John 20:19-23</i>

(E) Readings for today are: -

Introit	Wisdom 1:7
Epistle 1	Acts 2: 1-11
Sequence	Veni, Sancte Spiritus
Gospel	John 14. 23-31

"Receive the Holy Spirit"

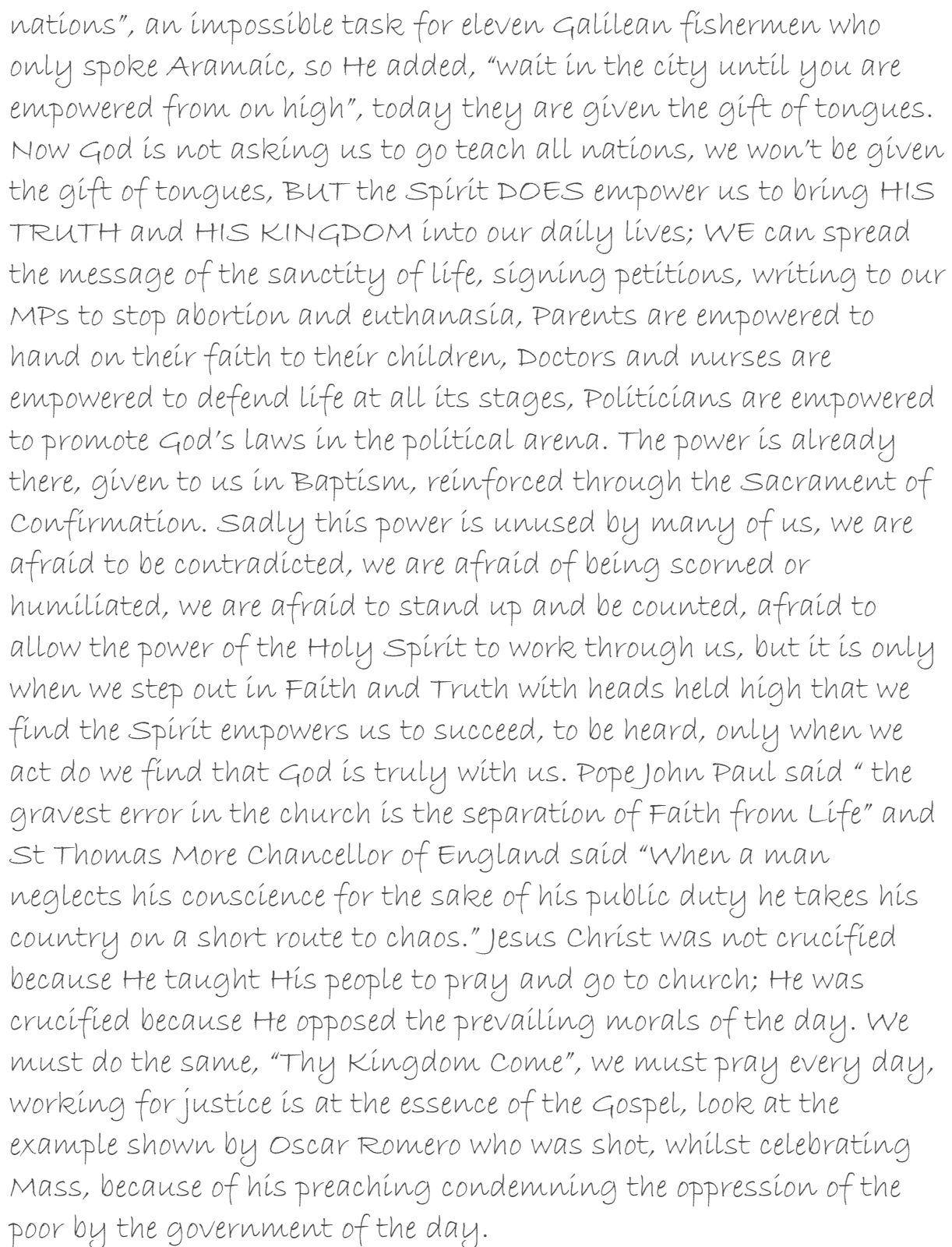
Pentecost is a Jewish Feast with a Greek name, pente means 5, a pentagon is a five-sided shape. The book of Exodus records that 50 days after the Passover and Crossing the Red Sea into freedom, they reached Mount Sinai, where Moses made a Covenant with God:- that Israel would be God's people and God would be their God, traveling with them into the promised land. He gave them ten commandments and the Law; it was the birthday of Israel as God's people. This Sinai Covenant is deep in the hearts of all Jewish people and they, just as Jesus did as a boy with His parents, renew the Sinai Covenant every year on this day - "We are God's people and He is our God"

Many Jews who had travelled across the world, would come home to Jerusalem for this festival, they no longer spoke Hebrew, but the language of their adopted country. Our first reading gives 11 language groups from around the Mediterranean, it was the perfect day to begin the Church: a church for all nations. Going back to Spain, Rome, Mesopotamia (modern Iraq) they would take home the message of Jesus of Nazareth who had conquered death.

Today the birthday of the Church teaches us three facts about our calling to be His people: -

First is this: -


God never asks us to do anything without giving us the means to do it. On Ascension Day Jesus told His Apostles to "Go teach all



nations", an impossible task for eleven Galilean fishermen who only spoke Aramaic, so He added, "wait in the city until you are empowered from on high", today they are given the gift of tongues. Now God is not asking us to go teach all nations, we won't be given the gift of tongues, BUT the Spirit DOES empower us to bring HIS TRUTH and HIS KINGDOM into our daily lives; WE can spread the message of the sanctity of life, signing petitions, writing to our MPs to stop abortion and euthanasia, Parents are empowered to hand on their faith to their children, Doctors and nurses are empowered to defend life at all its stages, Politicians are empowered to promote God's laws in the political arena. The power is already there, given to us in Baptism, reinforced through the Sacrament of Confirmation. Sadly this power is unused by many of us, we are afraid to be contradicted, we are afraid of being scorned or humiliated, we are afraid to stand up and be counted, afraid to allow the power of the Holy Spirit to work through us, but it is only when we step out in Faith and Truth with heads held high that we find the Spirit empowers us to succeed, to be heard, only when we act do we find that God is truly with us. Pope John Paul said "the gravest error in the church is the separation of Faith from Life" and St Thomas More Chancellor of England said "When a man neglects his conscience for the sake of his public duty he takes his country on a short route to chaos." Jesus Christ was not crucified because He taught His people to pray and go to church; He was crucified because He opposed the prevailing morals of the day. We must do the same, "Thy Kingdom Come", we must pray every day, working for justice is at the essence of the Gospel, look at the example shown by Oscar Romero who was shot, whilst celebrating Mass, because of his preaching condemning the oppression of the poor by the government of the day.

The Second Lesson of Pentecost is this: -

The Church exists to break down barriers of race and culture, to build bridges of unity, (unity notice - NOT uniformity, races and



nations must preserve their own languages, cultures and ways of worship, we must learn to respect each other's differences). Like a great orchestra we need to learn to work in harmony together to spread the Word of God, not through conquest or fear but through respecting the good in others and their religions. On the first day of Pentecost all nations heard the Word of God in their own language, God has no favourite language or country, we must follow His example, racism in any form is evil.

Our third lesson is this: -

The Spirit is not confined to the Church, He breathes where He wills. The Spirit of God can be found in the most unexpected places, even outside the institutionalized church. Everyone who works for justice and peace and the moral law, Muslim, Jew, Hindu, believer or not, works for God's kingdom. Where there is love and service to the needy, there is the Spirit of God.

If you take only one thing from this sermon today, take the lesson that without action the Spirit cannot be fulfilled within us, stand up for what is True, Just and Moral at all times, but also remember that the foundation of any work done in His name depends upon the two-fold action of prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We depend completely on the Holy Spirit to do good works, as well as to persist in the Christian faith despite the world's opposition.

There is an intrinsic connection between faith and works, a connection the Protestant reformers tragically severed. If we pray but are not charitable, our prayers are useless; if we try to be charitable but do not pray, we are doomed to fail, for we need the power of the Holy Spirit to overcome our fallen nature. After Christ tells his disciples that he will send the Spirit to them, he says that they will "give testimony." In other words, they will preach the Gospel to the ends of the world, working to convert all peoples to Christ. But such a testimony will be resisted by the world, and Jesus even says that "whosoever kills you will think that he does a

service to God." It is humanly impossible to face such resistance and keep persisting, but the Holy Spirit gives us a power that is supernatural: the power to be faithful in our witness, no matter who is against us.



"God's Spirit is in my heart, He has called me and set me apart"



We are invited by Monsignor John Armitage, the Rector at the national Shrine of Our Lady at Walsingham, to take part in a Rosary Relay this afternoon, 31 May. Each Diocese has been asked to encourage their people to pray the Rosary either individually, or where possible in groups, during a designated hour. The Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle been asked to pray the Rosary at 4.00pm. We are all asked to join in and pray the Rosary at that time and Bishop Robert will lead this at St Mary's Cathedral at 4pm and it will be live streamed from the Cathedral and their YouTube channel

Please remember in your prayers all the sick of the parish and all those suffering from COVID19, their families and friends.

If you have any prayer intentions please email them to shaunadevitt@tiscali.co.uk for inclusion in the newsletter

Please also remember the dead

Eternal Rest Grant unto Them Oh Lord

WEEKLY COLLECTION

Thank You to All who have continued to make a weekly contribution in some way or another, it is gratefully received and necessary for the continued upkeep of our two churches.

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

St Wilfrid's

Ford House

Sunderland Road

Gateshead NE8 3QR

St Joseph's

Presbytery

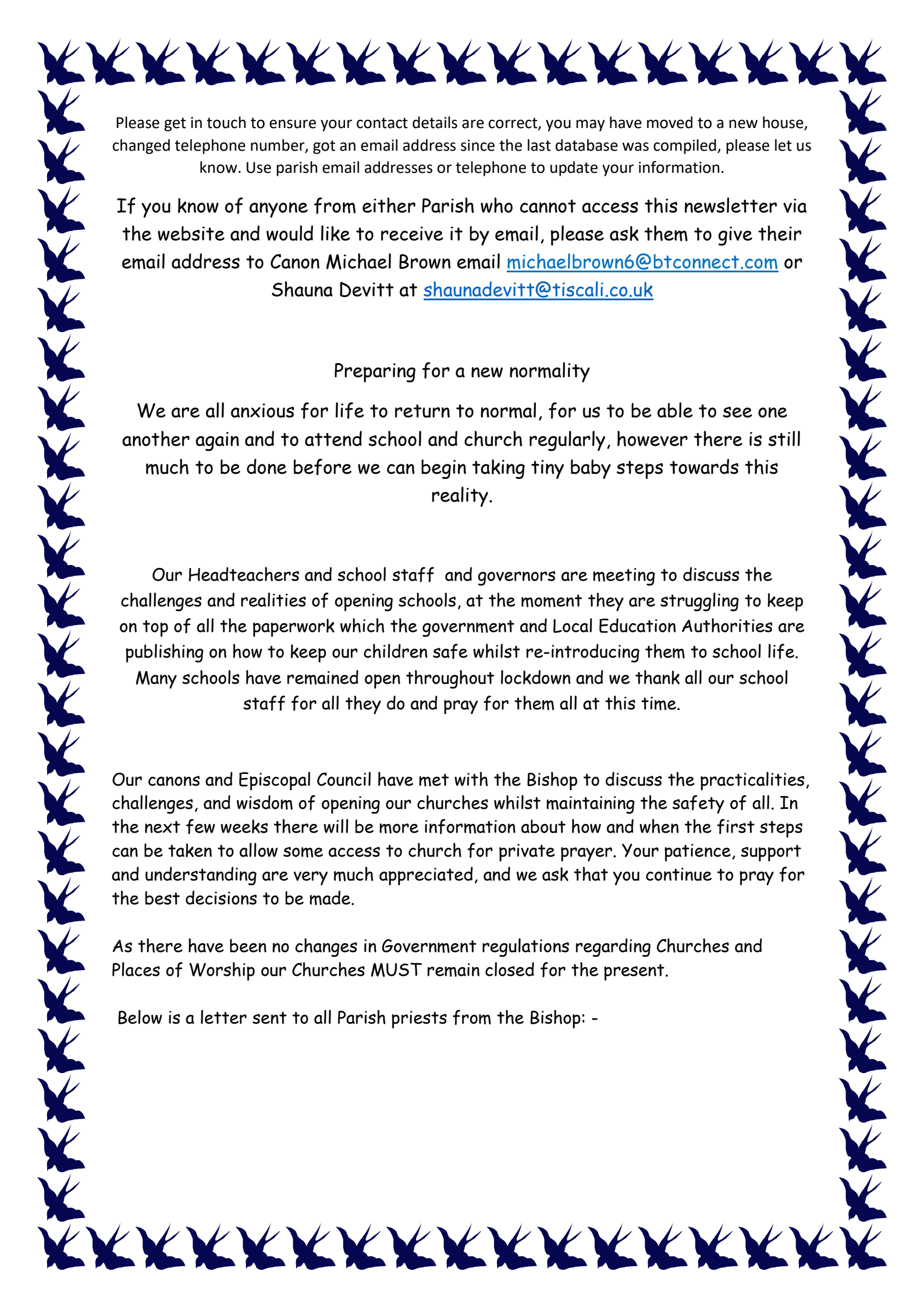
High West Street

Gateshead NE8 1LX

PLEASE REMEMBER YOU CAN FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK

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, it is at times like this that we realise how important it is to hold an up to date data base of contact details.



Please get in touch to ensure your contact details are correct, you may have moved to a new house, changed telephone number, got an email address since the last database was compiled, please let us know. 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

Preparing for a new normality

We are all anxious for life to return to normal, for us to be able to see one another again and to attend school and church regularly, however there is still much to be done before we can begin taking tiny baby steps towards this reality.

Our Headteachers and school staff and governors are meeting to discuss the challenges and realities of opening schools, at the moment they are struggling to keep on top of all the paperwork which the government and Local Education Authorities are publishing on how to keep our children safe whilst re-introducing them to school life.

Many schools have remained open throughout lockdown and we thank all our school staff for all they do and pray for them all at this time.

Our canons and Episcopal Council have met with the Bishop to discuss the practicalities, challenges, and wisdom of opening our churches whilst maintaining the safety of all. In the next few weeks there will be more information about how and when the first steps can be taken to allow some access to church for private prayer. Your patience, support and understanding are very much appreciated, and we ask that you continue to pray for the best decisions to be made.

As there have been no changes in Government regulations regarding Churches and Places of Worship our Churches **MUST** remain closed for the present.

Below is a letter sent to all Parish priests from the Bishop: -



Dear Fathers and Deacons,

Following the meeting of the Episcopal Council, and the Chapter of Canons, I thought you might find it helpful if I provided additional information about the reopening of churches that you could share with your people.

As always, your health and safety and that of your parishioners, volunteers and staff is my utmost priority. As we await guidance from the Catholic Bishops' Conference and from the recently established Places of Worship Task Force, as to when and how our Churches will reopen, please be assured that the Diocese is developing plans which will enable the COVID-19 secure reopening of all of our buildings.

As you are aware, I have consulted with the Chapter of Canons and the Partnership Deans in deciding which Parish Priests to approach about the possibility of opening their Churches. Once we have established which Churches might reopen first, a small number will be selected in which we will pilot the reopening procedures. Our learning from these "dry runs" will be incorporated into the approach we will take across the Diocese and it can then be shared more widely.

To ensure that we all return to safe environments, there is much that needs to be done and the Curia is supporting me with these practical tasks. The reopening planning will include conversations with the Parish Priest and his key co-workers, following which the Property Department will prepare and undertake site-specific risk assessments. After the risk assessment is complete, protocols and procedures will be developed and put in place to enable the building, whether that be the church or Parish Hall for example, to reopen safely and securely. The Curia will source and have delivered to you packs of resources to enable an initial deep clean and some on-going cleaning of buildings to be undertaken. Full compliance with these Diocesan protocols and procedures will be a requirement for Clergy, employees and all volunteers so that the opening of our Churches, and indeed all buildings, is safe and shown to be safe.

I fully appreciate the importance of the reopening of our Churches and our shared desire to see this happen. You must however await further guidance from me, not least of all on which churches are to reopen first, before taking any action.

Every blessing,
+Robert



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

Community Support

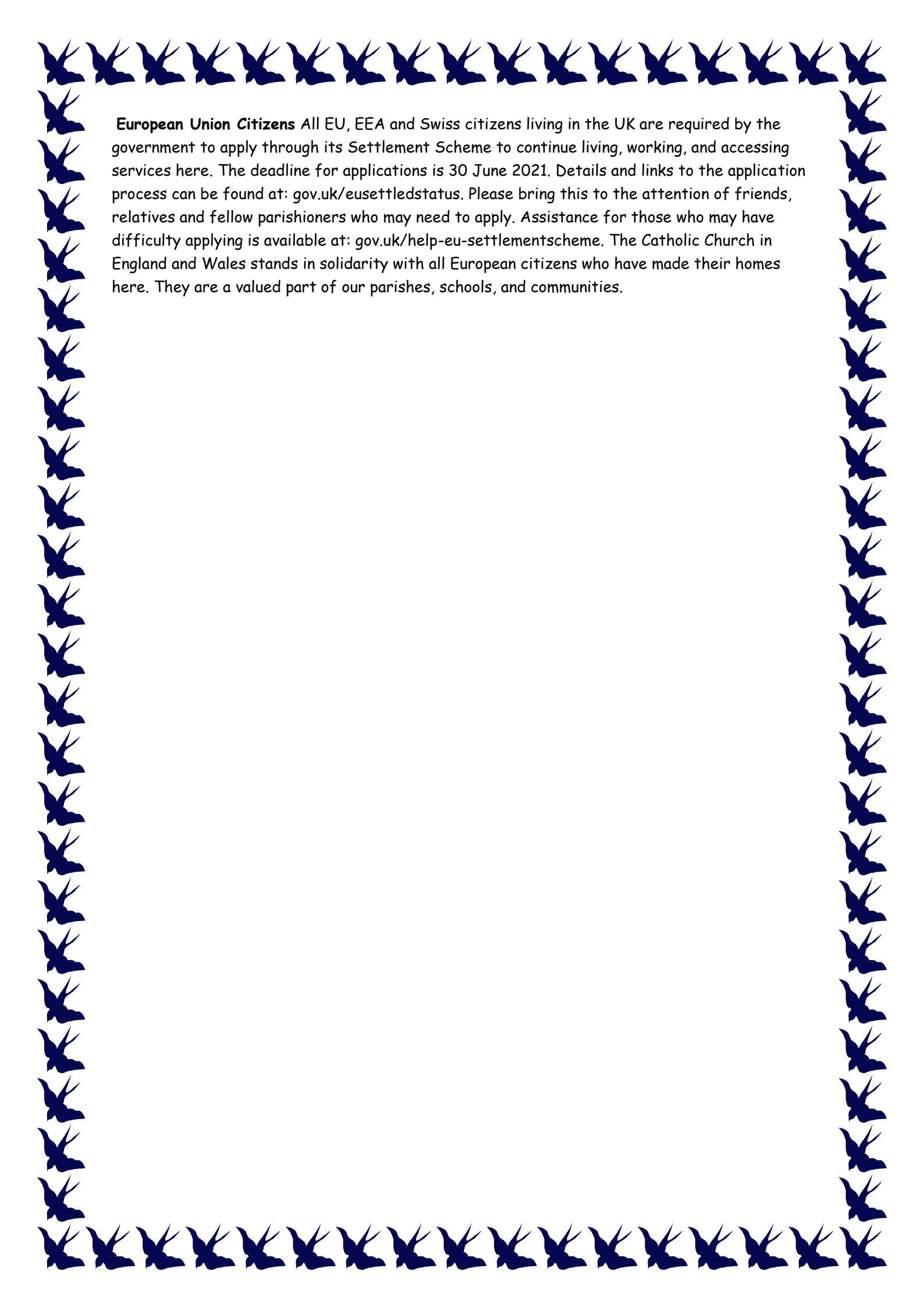
Gateshead Council have a dedicated page on their website offering a network of support for those who need help: -

<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/eusettdstatus. 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.