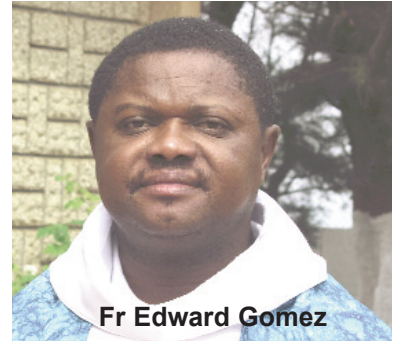


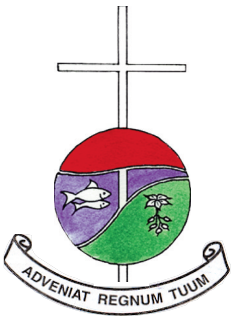
## 30 fruitful years in the Priesthood



Fr David Jimoh Jarju



Fr Edward Gomez



# *The Diocese of Banjul* NEWSLETTER

*Incorporating The Catholic Newsletter*

**Pentecost:**  
*celebrating the  
Church's birthday*



**Keeping the flame  
of faith alive in our  
young communicants**



*Requiescant in pace*  
**Remembering  
Margareta Edenius  
and  
Fr Matthias Murphy**





## ALL BRANCHES OPEN TO THE PUBLIC NOW

OPEN FROM MONDAYS TO SATURDAYS: 8:30am to 8:00pm

50 KAIRABA AVENUE - Telephone: 4399144, 4378489

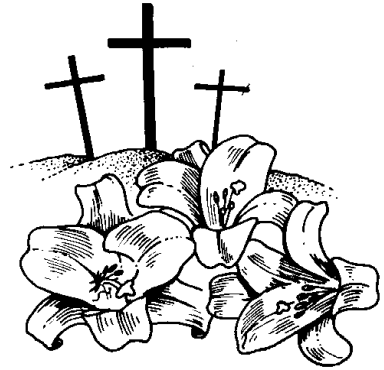
### LIST OF BRANCHES & IMPLANTS

1. Bakau New Town	6868820	20. Kairaba Avenue	6868801
2. Bakoteh	6868816	21. Kaw Junction L/Kunda	6868861
3. Barra, North Bank Region	6868858	22. Kololi Highway	6868832
4. Banjul Leman Street	6868806	23. Lamin Village Opp Galp	6868815
5. Bansang	6969915	24. Latrikunda Sabiji	6868847
6. Basse Santa Su	6868839	25. London Corner	6868807
7. Basse Highway	6969865	26. Old Jeshwang	6868831
8. Brikama Nyambai	6968874	27. Old Yundum Market	6868843
9. Brikama Hawla Kunda	6868810	28. Sanyang	6868824
10. Brusubi Mini Market	6868819	29. Sayer Jobe Avenue	6868808
11. Brusubi Galp Station	6969873	30. Serrekunda Bartess	6868836
12. Bundung	6868821	31. Serekunda Mosque Road	6868814
13. Busumballa	6868827	32. Soma	6868837
14. Churchill's Town	6868817	33. Sukuta	6868856
15. Cooperative	6868822	34. Tabokoto	6868813
16. Dippakunda	6868812	35. Tallinding	6868809
17. Fajara	6868825	36. Westfield Opp. World Mobile	6868910
18. Farafenni	6868838	37. Westfield Next to Church	6868864
19. Kanifing Estate	6868842		



## By way of introduction

# The risen Lord: hope and comfort of all Christians



EASTER morning comes each year as a reminder of renewal, of life restored. After 40 days of Lent and the solemnity of Holy Week, it instructs us that suffering can have meaning, that we can be restored and even increased, through pain and sacrifice. Ours were the sufferings Jesus carried, and by his stripes we are healed (Isaiah 53:4). This isn't a belief unique to Christians. Buddha's first noble truth is that to live is to suffer.

A sense of defeat and despair enveloped Jesus' disciples as he suffered and died on the cross and his body was placed lifeless in the tomb. Despite what the Saviour had repeatedly said of his death and subsequent rising again, they had not understood.

The dark afternoon of his crucifixion, however, was soon followed by the joyous morning of his resurrection. But that joy came only as the disciples became eye-witnesses of the resurrection, for even the declaration of angels that he had risen was at first incomprehensible: it was something so totally unprecedented. They felt for a while defeated, struck down and abandoned.

Mary Magdalene and a few other faithful women came early to the Saviour's tomb that Sunday morning, bringing

spices and ointments to complete the anointing they had begun when their Lord's body was hastily lain in the tomb before the approaching Sabbath.

On this morning of mornings they were greeted by an open tomb - the covering stone having been rolled away - and by two angels, who declared: 'Why are you looking for the living among the dead? He is not here, he is risen: remember what he told his disciples whilst in Galilee.'

We are called to share the Good News with joy and confidence that God's marvellous saving action through Christ's resurrection has won the victory over sin, evil and death.

May we, like the women, be so filled with the joy and enthusiasm of Christ's resurrection that we too just have to share this good news with the whole world.

The resurrection of Jesus reassures us that he, the Christ, is the hope and comfort of all Christians, and close to all human situations of suffering and injustice.

*Fr Peter S. Lopez*



## FAMILY CIRCLE

What's the difference  
between aspirin  
and paracetomal?

*Page 12*

**'I shall arise  
and go to my Father'**

Bishop Ellison's Lent  
message for the Year of Mercy

*Page 22*



## IN THIS ISSUE

- 4 Pentecost: *what it means for Jews and Christians*
- 5 Here & there: *Happy 30th anniversary*
- 7 Do you know? *quiz*
- 9 Early days: *the reminiscences of Fr John Sharpe*
- 11 Why look for the living among the dead?  
*Bishop Ellison's Easter message*
- 12 Family Circle: *aspirin and paracetomal*  
*Safeguarding the flame of faith in our young people*
- 13-19 Sunday Reflections, April and May
- 14 The Pope's Prayer Intentions.
- 20 From beyond the diocese: *West African bishops meet*
- 22 'I shall arise': *Bishop Ellison's message*
- 23: The plight of Syria's children
- 24 Question Box: *What is Pentecostalism?*
- 26 Gambian Christian Anniversaries  
*Death in 1917 of Fr Gabriel Sanneh*
- 27 Weekday celebrations: *The Annunciation, Augustine*
- 28 Fee moi Gambia
- 29 Daily Mass readings, April and May
- 30 End piece: *Margareta Edenius & Fr Matthias Murphy*
- 32 The feeding of the five thousand: *Gospel & picture*



*First published Palm Sunday 1976*  
**THE DIOCESE OF BANJUL NEWSLETTER**  
*Incorporating The Catholic Newsletter*  
**APRIL / MAY Volume 40 No. 2**

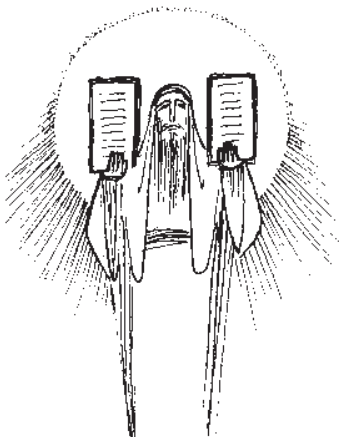
Published by The Gambia Pastoral Institute  
33 Kairaba Avenue  
PMB 296 Serrekunda, The Gambia, West Africa  
Telephone 4394847 Email [info@gpi.gm](mailto:info@gpi.gm)  
Editor *Fr Peter S. Lopez* Editorial Consultant *David Somers*  
Layout *Betty Quacoo*  
Production *Henry Gomez, Frédéric Diatta*



# The Church's birthday

## What PENTECOST means for Jews and for Christians

PENTECOST - *Penticosti* in Greek - means 'fiftieth day'. The ancient Jewish festival of Pentecost was the 'Feast of Weeks' at the end of grain harvest, 50 days after Passover. Exodus 34:22 says, 'You shall observe the feast of weeks, the first fruits of the harvest.'



Over time, the Jews came to celebrate Pentecost not only to give thanks for the harvest but to commemorate the day when God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses. This day, the Jews assert, celebrates the founding of the Jewish nation - because no people can consider themselves a nation unless they have laws.

### Pentecost for Christians

Early Christians regarded Pentecost as the day when the Church was founded, because on that day the Holy Spirit descended on the apostles, as Christ had promised. Just as the Jews celebrate the beginning of their nation, so Christians at Pentecost celebrate the beginning of the Church, when Peter and the apostles, empowered by the Spirit, at once began proclaiming Christ's message of salvation.

Jerusalem was always crowded at Pentecost. It was the ideal time and place: 'Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem... All those who welcomed Peter's message were baptised, and that day about three thousand men were added... And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.' (Acts 2:5,41,47)



The Christian celebration of Pentecost originated in the East in the 3rd century.

Pentecost ranks after Easter Sunday as the second great feast of the Christian calendar, celebrated 50 days after Easter Sunday, the seventh Sunday and last day of Easter Time.

### 'Freshness, imagination and newness...'



In an ecumenical address at the Catholic Cathedral of the Holy Spirit in Istanbul, Turkey, on 29th November 2104, Pope Francis declared:

'The Holy Spirit brings unity to the Church: unity in faith, unity in love, unity in interior life. The Church and other churches and ecclesial

communities are called to allow themselves be guided by the Holy Spirit, and to remain always open, docile and obedient.

'Ours is a hopeful perspective, but one which is also demanding. The temptation is always within us to resist the Holy Spirit, because he takes us out of our comfort zone and unsettles us; he makes us get up, and drives the Church forward. It is always easier and more comfortable to settle in our sedentary and unchanging ways. But in truth, the Church shows her fidelity to the Holy Spirit in as much as she does not try to control or tame him.

We Christians become true missionary disciples, able to challenge consciences, when we throw off our defensiveness and allow ourselves to be led by the Spirit. He is freshness, imagination and newness...

'In our journey of faith and fraternal living, the more we allow ourselves to be humbly guided by the Spirit of the Lord, the more we will overcome misunderstandings, divisions and disagreements and be a credible sign of unity and peace.

### A prayer for the Jewish people

Let us pray also for the Jewish people, to whom the Lord our God spoke first, that he may grant them to advance in love of his name and in faithfulness to his covenant.

ALMIGHTY, ever-living God, who bestowed your promises on Abraham and his descendants, graciously hear the prayers of your Church, that the people you first made your own may attain the fullness of redemption. Through Christ our Lord.

(from the liturgy for Good Friday)



# Here & there

## NEWS FROM AROUND THE DIOCESE

### 30th anniversary: Fr Edward Gomez and Fr David Jimoh Jarju

TWO priests of the Diocese of Banjul are about to celebrate the 30th anniversary of their ordination.

Fr Edward Gomez and Fr David Jimoh Jarju were ordained within a fortnight of each other in April 1986 by Bishop Michael Cleary: Fr Gomez at Banjul, and Fr Jarju at Kartong.

The year before they had been made deacons at Bakau Stadium when Bishop Cleary ordained Fr Athony Gabasi and Fr Peter Gomez - the first Gambians to be made priests in modern times.

#### Teaching John Paul

Fr Edward Gomez, widely known as 'Father Edu', was born in April 1959 in Banjul. He attended St John's Primary School, Banjul, followed by the Methodist Primary School, Janjangbureh, and Njau Primary, Upper Saloum.

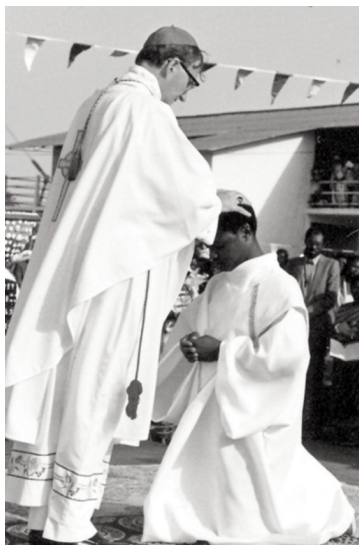
After St Augustine's High School - where he excelled in games - he began training for the priesthood at St Paul's seminary in Liberia, and was ordained priest in Banjul on 12th April 1986.

In October 1995 he began a master's degree course at the Catholic University of West Africa at Port Harcourt, Nigeria. In July 1997 he became Director of Studies at St Peter's Junior Seminary, Lamin.

Fr Gomez has been Administrator at the Cathedral, lecturer at Gambia College, and is a regular broadcaster on radio and television. In February 1992, during the visit of St John Paul II, Fr Gomez was Master of Ceremonies at the Mass in the stadium at Bakau, having earlier visited Rome to meet the Pope and teach him a few phrases in Wolof.

He was a committee member in the Accelerated Results Implementation Project, which led the fight against HIV/Aids.

In May 2009 Fr Gomez was made a Member of the Order of the Republic of The Gambia (MRG).



**Moment of ordination  
12th April 1986**

#### Educational enthusiast

David Jimoh Jarju was born in January 1958 at Kartong. He attended St Martin's Primary School Kartong and St Augustine's High School before entering St Paul's Seminary in Liberia in 1978. He was ordained priest by Bishop Michael Cleary at Kartong on 26th April 1986.

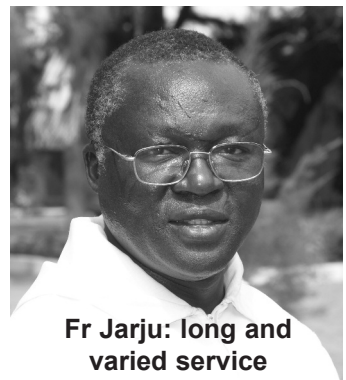
Fr Jarju's long and very varied service includes running parishes at Darsilami, Bansang and Njongon.

Fr Jarju has regularly broadcast his thoughts on traditional Gambian proverbs.

He has taught at Bansang, Lamin and Banjul, and lectured at the University of The Gambia. He has been Vice Principal of St Augustine's Senior Secondary School, Banjul, and Principal of St Peter's Senior Technical Secondary School, Lamin. He has been Director of CaDO (the Catholic Development Office) and was Vicar-General of the Diocese of Banjul from 2007-2012.

In addition to these and other responsibilities, Fr Jarju has gained MSc and MEd degrees at the University of Bristol, England.

At present he is Education Secretary at the Catholic Secretariat.



**Fr Jarju: long and varied service**



## Thirty Years in the Priesthood

April 1986 – April 2016

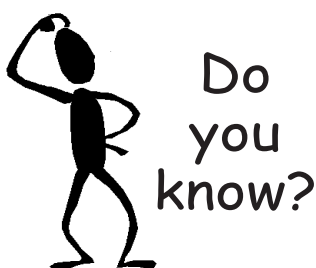
**FATHER EDWARD GOMEZ  
FATHER DAVID JIMOH JARJU**

**Sunday 17th April at 10 am HOLY MASS at Brikama**

**Friday 29th April at 9 pm JOINT CHOIR CONCERT**

**Saturday 30th April HOLY MASS at Kartong**

**Friday 3rd May GALA DINNER**



- 1 How many books in the Old Testament bear the name of a woman?
- 2 What seaside town in Senegal has long been a place of pilgrimage?
- 3 Name the New Testament book which begins, 'Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son...'
- 4 Which three African countries has Pope Francis visited?
- 5 Name the vestment shown on the right.

Answers on page 24



## On the way to reconciliation



ON the first Saturday of Lent - 27th February - many Gambian Christians assembled at the Shrine of Our Lady Queen of Peace at Kukujang Mariama for the opening of the Door of Mercy and the annual Pilgrimage of Reconciliation.

The rites included a reading from St Luke and from the Papal Bull on 'the mystery of mercy'; the remembrance of baptism and the renewal of vows; adoration of the Blessed Sacrament; and the hearing of individual confessions.

The final prayer was: 'Lord God our Father, from whom all humanity receives life, you did not send your Son to condemn the world, but to save it. We pray you, send your Spirit upon us, that the face of the world may be renewed, that all humanity may have life in abundance, that your peace may be established everywhere. Then will your Name be praised among us, and your glory appear in our midst...'

## Teachers prepare for Bible quiz

AROUND 30 grade I Religious Education teachers from mission, Government and private schools in Region I took part in a workshop at GPI from Wednesday 20th to Friday 22nd January.

The workshop centred on the annual Bible story-telling and drama competition to be held in April.

Fr Peter Lopez, Director of GPI, welcomed participants, who were led by Obi Laz Enwalani, CRE Co-ordinator.

## GPI's up-river trek

PRIESTS, sisters, catechists, parishes, parishioners and Catholic schools in six rural towns were visited during a recent week-long tour by the Director of GPI and his 'trek team'. The tour encompassed Basse, Bansang, Fulabantang, Brikama Ba, Soma and Bwiam.

The Director, Fr Peter Lopez, was accompanied by the Catechist Co-Ordinator, Fr Antoine Sambou, and the CRE Co-ordinator, Obi Laz Enwalani.

Such a trek, helping GPI to re-enforce its outreach programme throughout the diocese, is conducted annually.

The tour took place from Thursday 3rd to Thursday 10th March. The driver was Nicolas Joof.

## School heads' Lent retreat

PRINCIPALS and head teachers from Catholic schools in Regions 1-3 took part in a Lenten retreat at GPI on Thursday 17th and Friday 18th March. About 30 educationalists attended.

## National Day of Prayer at Bakau

AN ECUMENICAL National Day of Prayer called by the Gambia Christian Council took the form of a rally on Saturday 4th March at the handball court of the Independence Stadium, Bakau.

Leading prayers and giving exhortations were the Bishop of the Methodist Church in The Gambia, the Rt Revd Hannah C. Faal-Heim; the Catholic Bishop, the Rt Revd Robert P. Ellison; and the Anglican Bishop, the Rt Revd James Odico.

Also taking part were Pastor John C. Njie, Pastor Sylvester Jammeh, the Revd Priscilla Johnson, and the Vice Chairman of the Gambia Christian Council, Victoria Clarke.



The event was supported by Guaranty Trust Bank, Africell, the Gambia Pastoral Institute, Solmic Catering, Unique Graphics, the Knights of St Peter & St Paul, West Coast Radio and Hot FM.

## Fifty years

The Gambia Christian Council was founded in 1966. It is formed of the Anglican, Catholic and Methodist churches. Other Christian churches, including the Baptists, YMCA, YWCA, are affiliated members. The council is mandated by the Gambia Government to register Christian organisations operating in this country.

The council has engaged in various development projects, especially those it regards as best undertaken collectively rather than at an individual denominational level.

In January 1968 the council called on the President at State House, inaugurating what has become an annual event.

## Marriage celebration at GPI

GPI was on the evening of Tuesday 15th March the scene of a happy wedding reception. Earlier that day, a member of the GPI Communications Unit, Abdoulie Korkah-Bah, was married to Isatou Sowe.



The GPI Director and staff wish the newly-married couple every happiness.

*Keep up-to-date with your Diocese!*

Visit [www.banjuldiocese.gm](http://www.banjuldiocese.gm)



## Bishop Ellison's 10 years as leader of Gambia's Catholics



SATURDAY 14th May, the Feast of St Matthias, will mark the tenth anniversary of the episcopal ordination of the Right Revd Robert Patrick Ellison CSSp as Third Bishop of Banjul.

### Early years

The bishop was born in Blackrock, County Dublin, Ireland, in February 1942. From 1954 to 1959 he attended

Blackrock College, before entering the novitiate of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost.

After his first profession in 1960 he studied philosophy at Kimmage Manor before entering University College Dublin to read maths, chemistry and botany, gaining a BSc in 1965. He also studied at the Gregorian University in Rome, where in 1970 he was awarded an STL (*Sacrae Theologiae Licentia*).

### First arrival in Banjul

Fr Ellison arrived in Banjul on 27th October 1970, having been ordained at Kimmage Manor the previous July by the Archbishop of Dublin.

He taught at St Augustine's High School Banjul until July 1971. In May that year he was also appointed Administrator of the Cathedral.

Fr Ellison later proceeded to Rome, where from October 1972 to the following June he studied theology, law and the

history of Islam at the Pontifical Institute for Islamic & Arabic Studies.

From October 1973 to July 1974 he was Priest-in-Charge at St Michael's Njongon.

Fr Ellison then studied at Marianella, Dublin, proceeding to teach theology for two years and then Islamic studies for a further four years. He was Director of the Philosophy Formation House.

In 1980 Fr Ellison was awarded a certificate in linguistics by the Summer Institute of Linguistics at High Wycombe, England.

### Return to The Gambia

Fr Ellison returned to The Gambia in January 1981. He was again Administrator of the Cathedral, and was appointed Vicar-General. He then took charge of building and administration at the Junior Seminary, Lamin.

In 1985 he became Parish Priest of Star of the Sea Bakau, and District Superior of the Holy Spirit Congregation.

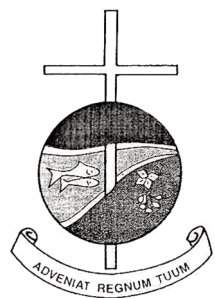
Fr Ellison was in England from 1991-92, studying human and spiritual formation at the Institute of St Anselm, Kent.

Fr Ellison returned to The Gambia as Director of the Junior Seminary Lamin from 1992 until 1994, when he was appointed Director of GPI.

He returned to Rome in 1999 as Secretary-General of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit.

On 25th February 2006 Pope Benedict XVI appointed Fr Ellison Bishop of Banjul in succession to Bishop Michael Cleary CSSp, who had presided over the diocese since 1981.

Among the many features of Bishop Ellison's leadership have been the Diocesan Assembly in March/April 2008 and developments enabling the diocese to be increasingly dynamic and self-supporting.



## Pious practices

**MANY devotional practices in the Church are so habitual that we don't think about them. But whenever we make the sign of the Cross, for instance, or dip our fingers into holy water, we should do so in awareness of what the action means. We shouldn't perform such actions to impress others or to tell ourselves how holy and good we are. We perform them to honour God and our membership of his Church.**

*Jesus spoke to them, saying, 'I am the light of the world.' (John 8:12)*

*Jesus said, 'I have come into the world so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness.' (John 12:46)*

ON or near the altar during Mass and other services, candles symbolise Christ the light of the world.

The small candles that individual worshippers may light before shrines, statues and icons are known as 'votive' candles ('votive' meaning 'voluntary').

*At Westminster Cathedral in London, votive candle-stands bear a notice:*

'When we have gone, the candle stays alight, kindling in hearts and minds the prayer we have already offered for the sad, the sick, the suffering, the peace of the world, and for thankfulness.

'The candle is a parable. It gives light, then burns itself out. Christ gave himself for others, and he calls on us to give ourselves for the service of others.

'The candle is a symbol. It symbolises love and hope, light and warmth: the world needs them all.'





embrace the digital  
explosion with speed



E X P E R I E N C E    T H E   D I F F E R E N C E



Your National 3G Operator

**YAAY BOROM**  
[www.gamcel.gm](http://www.gamcel.gm)

# Early days

**Fr JOHN SHARPE CSSp, retired missionary at Kunkujang Mariama, recalls his childhood and training for the priesthood**

MY family background was unusual in as much as my father William (Willie) was the product of a mixed marriage: his father John was Protestant and his mother Esther, Catholic.

The Sharpe family originally came from Tara. A great grandfather served as a Protestant minister there, while a Revd John Sharpe ministered in Kells in the 16th century.

My mother was Kathleen O'Brien, daughter of Morgan O'Brien, the Glen of Aherloe, County Tipperary, while her mother was a Slowey from Ballyjamesduff, County Cavan.

## My loving father

I was born in Tipperary Town, where my father worked as a plumber; cycling to work with his tools on the back of his bike. One of my earliest memories was watching him melt down lead pipes with a blow-lamp. One winter he made a snow sledge for me from old pipes. But unknown to my mother, used her ironing-board as a seat. (He wasn't very popular when it broke.)

My father did a lot of work at the Holy Ghost Novitiate in Kilshane, and was well regarded there. From an early age, I remember both my parents wanting me to become a missionary priest. I still recall sitting on my father's knee while he taught me the 'Our Father'.

Many years later, when I was studying theology in Kimmage, Fr Tommie Gough, the Novice Master, said to me, 'If you become as good a man as your father, you will be very good indeed.'

My mother was also very devout, with a special attachment to the 'Little Flower', St Therese of Lisieux. We said the rosary every night. No one was excused, except my father, who occasionally dozed off after a hard day's work. But when my parents went to the cinema on Friday nights, we sometimes made a short-cut, just saying 'Hail Mary, Holy Mary' fifty times!

## Memorable First Communion

My First Holy Communion was marred when I slipped going upstairs on the previous night with a kettle of hot water, but the new suit, communion rosette and the £3 collected from relatives and friends (a fortune in those days) made it a day to remember.

I soon became an altar server, and my main assignment was the 7 am Mass at the nearby Convent of Mercy.

As we lived in a new housing estate in the town, with many young married couples, the street was always full of children.

During frosty weather we children poured buckets of water on the steep road, and donning our hobnail boots, spent many hours skating down the frozen hill.

During the summer months the street became a hurling pitch, which resulted in many broken windows and parental disputes.



**'From an early age, I remember both my parents wanting me to become a missionary priest'**

## Down on the farm

An aunt of mine lived on a farm not far away. We often spent our summer holidays there. Our favourite occupation at her farm was saving hay with the horse-drawn mowing machine.

My job was to bring the food to the meadow. The taste of meadow food still remains with me.

The climax of the season was bringing the trams by hay-float to the farmyard. As the float was close to the ground, it was easy for us children to hitch a ride on it. When the work was over, winter feeding for cattle was guaranteed.

The other crops grown at the time were oats, barley and wheat, the latter being the cash crop.

We returned to school in September, but waited with anticipation for the day of the threshing.

There was only one threshing machine in the locality, so all the farmers helped each other. When it was our family's turn to use the machine, it meant a day off school.

We were fascinated by the machine that kept on going all day long without a driver. The long conveyor belt, the sight of the sheaves of corn being fed into the thresher; and the wheat pouring into the sack below amazed us.

Our job was to remove the chaff, which was accomplished with varying degrees of success, often to the accompaniment of groans and curses from some men.

A meal was provided at mid-day, followed by tea and home-made bread. Then after a few puffs of the pipe, the work resumed.

## Spilling the precious liquid

On one occasion, Micky Murphy sent me to town on a bicycle to buy a gallon of porter.

But to my great misfortune, I fell on my way home and spilled the precious liquid. The sight of my return with a battered, empty gallon jug resulted in a string of the foulest obscenities emanating from an exasperated, (and thirsty) Micky!

### Killing a pig

Possibly the biggest event on the farm was the killing of a pig. Portions of meat and black pudding were sent around to various neighbours; and the remainder was cured in a barrel of salted water, which was later hung up on the kitchen ceiling. As for us children, we made use of the pig's bladder as a football!

Relatives and friends gathered at our house on Christmas night for a meal, followed by music, singing and card playing. There was plenty drink on offer and it was often two o'clock on St Stephen's Day before the last visitors staggered home.

### 'You will be a priest'

But in December 1952, tragedy struck our family. My father died suddenly at the early age of forty-two.

A difficult period followed, which was intensified with the death of my mother in February 1954.

They were the very same age. My mother's last words to me were, 'You will be a priest.'

At that time, my elder brother Billy was sixteen; Morgan was ten and my sister Tessie was four.

Billy left secondary school to take over my father's plumbing business.

Even though I remained at school, the upheaval and the distress caused me to fail my Intermediate Examination, having dodged many school days during the following two years.

During school holidays I worked at various jobs, including painting and plumbing, but the idea of becoming a priest always remained with me. I also joined the FCA (army reserve) and acquired the regulation heavy army overcoat, which served also as a blanket, and a strong pair of boots.

### The words of Isaiah

When I was in fifth year, a Holy Ghost Father, Farrel Sheridan CSSp, gave us a talk about vocations and put great emphasis on the career of the famous Tipperary-born Bishop Joseph Shanahan, 'paddling down the Niger river in a dug-out canoe'. After the talk I gave him my name, and he gently began the process of encouraging me to join the Order.

Looking back now, I am reminded of the words of Isaiah, 'You have seduced me, Lord, and I have let myself be seduced.'

I had a vocation, and a desire to give my life to God.

### Trouble with Latin

To enter the Novitiate, however, one of the main stipulations was to pass Latin in the Leaving Certificate Examination. I knew very little, and must admit to copying most of my answers from the students who sat near me. I have always been grateful to the examiner, who gave me the bare pass-mark of 40 per cent.

At that time, the family fortunes had sunk so low that I could not afford the clerical clothes needed. Thankfully, the Master of Novices, Fr Bill Higgins, supplied me with the cast-offs that had belonged to a student who had left the previous year.

On 2nd September 1954 I entered the Novitiate at Kilshane, just three miles from my home.

I remember halting at the gate to smoke a few last cigarettes!

### Companionship and kindness

What followed were some of the most satisfying years of my life; the quality of life. The companionship and the kindness of the Novice Master and his assistant were something I had not encountered before.

I made my first profession in September 1955, and along with fifty others transferred to Kimmage Manor in Dublin where I would spend the following decade.

Part of the course involved studying for a three-year degree at University College Dublin. We covered the five-mile journey on old bicycles, usually returning tired and hungry, and often soaked to the skin.

I did the Arts course, which included the dreaded classical Latin, but I soon switched to Roman history.

My army boots got great use during holiday periods, when large groups of us set off for long walks in the Dublin mountains. On one occasion, when we arrived back late, our punishment was to observe the 'great silence' (9.30 pm to 6 am) on empty stomachs.

Another tragedy occurred in the family. My only aunt was killed in a car accident. The car, driven by my brother, had been struck by a young man who had no driving licence.

### Ordination

Our class was ordained in Clonliffe College by Archbishop John McQuaid CSSp in July 1964.

Each student was allowed to invite ten guests for lunch afterwards at Kimmage Manor. Sadly, my own living relatives were very few. I returned home on the same evening, and it was a wonderful feeling to be able to celebrate my first Mass in the Sisters of Mercy Convent Chapel at the altar where I had served Mass as a boy.



I spent a very enjoyable holiday at home, and then it was back to Kimmage for our pastoral year, part of which was saying Mass at various locations. My favourite location was Peamount Sanatorium, where I struck up a friendship with Pat Burke, the farm manager.

In order to increase my mobility, I bought his old Morris Minor for £25. Because such a transaction was frowned on in official circles, I drove it back surreptitiously to Kimmage on a dark evening, and parked it in the farmyard well out of view. One of my friends overhauled it for me, and it made life much easier for me getting around the city.

### 'Your obedience is Gambia'

In June 1965 I called into office of the Provincial, Fr Tim O'Driscoll, to be given my missionary allocation.

'Father, your obedience is Gambia,' he said simply.

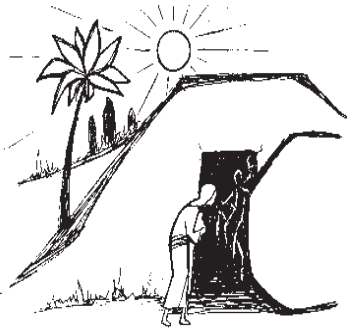
I had no hesitation in replying in the affirmative.

*Abridged from Fr Sharpe's memoir,  
'The Life of an Irish Missionary Priest'*

### In the June/July Newsletter:

*Assisting Fr Farrell at St Therese's Church Kanifing*





# Why look for the living among the dead?

The Easter message of Bishop ROBERT ELLISON CSSp

*DEAR Brothers and Sisters, and all men and women of goodwill in The Gambia. Peace be with you.*

The story of the death of Jesus ends with his burial. Luke tells us that the women who had come with him from Galilee were there. They took note of the location of the tomb and of the position of the body. Then they returned to Jerusalem that evening to prepare spices and ointments. And on the Sabbath day they rested in accordance with the law.

Luke follows up with the story of the resurrection of Jesus, in the last chapter of his Gospel.

## The faithful women

On the first day of the week, at the first sign of dawn, the women went to the tomb with the spices they had prepared.

It is clear that they went to the tomb that morning for one purpose only: to anoint the dead body of Jesus. This was in keeping with local tradition. However, even more so in this case: it was a final gesture of respect, devotion and loyalty to their Master.

Luke names the women as Mary of Magdala, Joanna and Mary, the mother of James. These women disciples are also mentioned by Luke earlier on in the public life of Jesus. 'They provided for him out of their own means'.

On arrival at the tomb, the women discovered that the stone had been rolled away, and that there was no body to anoint. Then two men appeared in dazzling garments, exactly as had happened when Jesus was transfigured on Mount Tabor. They said to the women: 'Why look among the dead for someone who is alive? He is not here'.

These messengers of God merely confirmed what the women had already observed. But they added some extra words: 'He has risen. Remember that he told you how the Son of Man must suffer and die and on the third day rise from the dead.' Therefore, there was no point in staring into an empty tomb.

As soon as they began to see the situation, the women left the tomb and ran to tell the apostles what had taken place. But to the apostles, the women's story seemed sheer nonsense.

## Why did the apostles at first disbelieve the women?

Hardly surprising? Women at that time had no right to testify in such matters, and they could not study the Torah.

Secondly, the apostles were grieving over the loss and tragedy of Jesus' death. Most of them had run away when Jesus was arrested. Peter was still hurting bitterly with the guilt of having denied his Master.

Thirdly, the apostles were the closest followers of Jesus. They were afraid that the Jewish religious leaders or the Roman authorities would come to arrest them next.

Grief, guilt and fear prevented them from believing.

But Peter decided to run to the tomb and see for himself. As he looked into the empty tomb, he could see that there was no body. Alone as he was, he might have remembered the day when he had told Jesus: 'Lord, this must never happen to you,' when Jesus spoke about his passion and death.

And then... Yes, Jesus had also said something about rising again.

Perhaps Peter now began to wonder... a first step to belief? And so he went back to his companions in the Upper Room.

## Fragile beginning

No matter how we look at the Gospel stories of the resurrection, they present us with a very fragile start for a religion that has endured for almost 2000 years.

On that first Easter morning, no one saw what happened or did not happen. What happened in the tomb was known only to God the Father and Jesus.

In spite of this, that is where most of us today still try to focus our thoughts - on the empty tomb. 'Why look among the dead for someone who is alive?'

The Gospel stories of the resurrection record the appearances of Jesus to his disciples over a period of 40 days before he ascended into heaven. These appearances were filled with powerful experiences of hope and new life.

At the same time, joy was often mixed with doubt. Thomas won the prize for refusing to believe until Jesus invited him to put his hand into his side, where the centurion had used a spear to test if Jesus had died.

## Entrusted to us

The Risen Lord has now entrusted his mission into our hands, hands that are weak, broken and sinful; people like Peter, Thomas, Matthew, Zaccheus and the Samaritan woman at the well.

Jesus knows our capacity for deceit, for greed, for lust and for power. If he could put his trust in our forefathers, he also calls us today to serve him to the best of our ability. If I can only accept his compassion, his mercy and his understanding of myself, then I can begin to share that same gentleness of his towards my brothers and sisters who also struggle to live an upright life.

This is good news for all of us. This could be, once again, the beginning of heaven on earth where, together, we re-create a world where the need to accuse or blame or condemn each other gives way to a world of goodwill, peace and, above all, mercy.

May Christ the morning star who came back from the dead, shed his peaceful light on all of us today: our families, our churches, our Muslim brothers and sisters, all other believers, our Head of State, and our government. *Amen.*



## family circle

### Oh, my poor head!

#### How common painkillers work - and when to take them

THE TWO remedies most often taken to counter-act mild pain are aspirin and paracetamol. We can buy them in supermarkets and corner-shops as well as in pharmacies.

In most cases we take such mild pain-killers on our own initiative, not because a doctor has prescribed them. So it's important to know how they work, and when to use them.



#### Aspirin

ASPIRIN has been widely used for about a century to treat such disorders as headache, menstrual pain and muscle discomfort.

Aspirin reduces the production of hormone-like chemicals that can induce inflammation, pain and fever. Because aspirin is anti-inflammatory, it is particularly helpful in treating joint pain and the stiffness caused by some types of arthritis.

Because aspirin also reduces fever, it is included in some commercial treatments for a fresh cold.

In small doses aspirin reduces the stickiness of blood particles used in clotting. This has led to its being prescribed by doctors to prevent heart attacks and mini-strokes in patients who have a history of these conditions. But this particular prescription involves a kind of 'slow release' aspirin which is not useful for relieving acute pain.

Aspirin should not be given to children except under close medical supervision; instead, give children paracetamol.

Aspirin may cause inflammation of the stomach lining, leading to indigestion or nausea. But such side effects are less likely if you take aspirin with food or take a coated tablet that does not release the drug until it reaches the intestine.

Prolonged use of aspirin may cause bleeding from the stomach. Never take aspirin regularly for more than two days except under medical supervision, because this may mask the symptoms of a serious disorder.

Aspirin is an ingredient in various composite medicines, being combined, for example, with codeine. Such information is always given on the packet.

#### Paracetamol

PARACETAMOL has been widely used since 1955. Like aspirin, it is a pain-killer used to treat headache or toothache and reduce fever.

Unlike aspirin, paracetamol does not cause stomach irritation or bleeding. So it's particularly useful as a pain-killer for people who suffer from peptic ulcer or who cannot tolerate aspirin.

Paracetamol can be used safely to treat children, for whom it is available as a syrup.

Paracetamol does not have an anti-inflammatory effect, so it is less effective than aspirin to treat injury to soft tissues such as muscles and ligaments.

Taken in normal doses, paracetamol rarely causes nausea or rash. But an over-dose may cause permanent damage to the liver, and can even be fatal.

Paracetamol is sold under various trade names such as Panadol.

Other often-used pain killers include ibuprofen, commonly sold under the trade name Neurofen.



**NB** Before taking any kind of medicine, always read the leaflet accompanying it. Keep all medicines out of the reach of children.

## Congratulations

### During April two Priests celebrate the 30th Anniversary of their Ordination

Tuesday 12th April  
Tuesday 26th April

Fr Edward Gomez  
Fr David Jimoh Jarju

### Also during April, four other Priests celebrate the Anniversary of their Ordination

Sunday 10th April

Fr Joseph Kabo (1999)  
Fr Michael Ndecky (1999)  
Fr Anthony Gabasi (1985)  
Fr Peter Gomez (1985)

Saturday 14th May  
*Feast of St Matthias*  
is the 10th Anniversary  
of the Episcopal Ordination  
of the Third Bishop of Banjul  
The Right Reverend  
Robert P. Ellison CSSp

FATHER, you have appointed your Son Jesus Christ eternal High Priest. Guide those he has chosen to be ministers of your Word and Sacraments, and help them to be faithful in fulfilling the ministry they have received; through the same Christ our Lord. *Amen*

#### SET-SETTAL

### Don't drop litter!

*Help keep your neighbourhood  
and the nation clean*



*Learn more about your Diocese*

Visit [www.banjuldiocese.gm](http://www.banjuldiocese.gm)

## Safeguarding the flame of faith in our new young communicants

AS everyone knows, Christmas is party-time not just for Christians but for many outside the Church who enjoy the general goodwill and the giving and receiving of presents.

Within the Church, First Communion is not dissimilar. Some families are only fitful in the faith, and others may be Catholic only in name: but they attach great significance to First Communion, and spend much time and money in preparation.

The boy or girl who is to receive Communion for the first time has been carefully prepared by the Church. But for some families the great day is not so much about the Church as the home and family: the food and drink, the happy guests, the music and dancing. It involves a lot of planning and expenditure. And no family wants a First Communion party that's inferior to that of the neighbours.

But the party is soon over. Life returns to normal, and 'normal' in some families does not extend to attending Mass every Sunday.

Some of our new young first communicants receive little or no encouragement in the family to partake of Holy Communion every Sunday. So their spiritual life languishes. They are baptised children of God, entitled to receive Christ in Holy Communion, but not yet truly close to him.

The very best way for adults to encourage faith and good practice in their children is to live the Catholic faith day by day in the home: daily prayers, co-operation and respect, regular attendance at Sunday Mass.

Many children do not receive such an encouragement in their family. For them, it is important that they feel welcome in church, and see that adult worshippers are devout and happy.

### 'The example of the Lord'

SOME years ago, at a question-and-answer session with Pope Benedict XVI, a priest asked: 'More and more, the young people who receive these sacraments [First Communion and Confirmation] prepare themselves well during catechetical sessions, but then don't come to Sunday Mass. It's natural to ask what sense this makes. Sometimes there's a desire to say, "Just stay at home..." Instead, however, we go on as always and accept them, thinking that... it's better not to snuff out the wick of a weak flame.'

Pope Benedict commented that he wasn't able to give an infallible answer to the dilemma. But he went on to say: 'When I was young, I was rather more severe.'



I said, "When the faith isn't there, when there's not the practice of the faith, the sacraments can't be conferred."

'When I was Archbishop of Milan, I always discussed this with my pastors. There were two factions: one severe, and one more generous.

'I too have realised, in the course of time, that we have to follow the example of the Lord, who was very open with the people who were at the margins of Israel at that time.

'He was a Lord of mercy - too open, according to the many official authorities, with sinners. He welcomed them, or allowed them to welcome him...drawing them to himself in his communion.'

### 'It seems right to be rather generous'

Pope Benedict continued: 'When there is no faith, when First Communion is just a party with a big lunch, nice clothes and nice gifts, then it can't be a sacrament of faith.

'But on the other hand, where we can see even a tiny flame of desire for communion in the Church, a desire from those children who want to enter into communion with Jesus, it seems right to be rather generous.'

Pope Benedict said that catechists should ensure that First Communion and Confirmation are not understood as automatic; they require a 'continuity of friendship with Jesus'.

He added, 'I know that children often have the desire to go to Sunday Mass, but their parents don't make this possible.

'We naturally should do everything possible to reach the parents and to awaken in them a sensibility for the path their children are taking...It's an occasion for meeting the parents, making the life of faith present also to the adults, so that they themselves can learn from their children, and to realise that this great solemnity [First Communion] makes sense and is authentic only ...in the context of a journey with Jesus, in the context of a life of faith.'

### Our response

In The Gambia, as everywhere, our priests are challenged by this very dilemma: what to do, or not to do, about admitting to the sacraments those whose faith seems feeble and whose desire is limited.

For lay people, it may at least be said that they should always receive Communion in a spirit of reverence, showing the young that participation in the Sacrament of the Altar on Sundays is a great joy and privilege, the high point of each week.

*LOVING Lord Jesus, grant that young people receiving Holy Communion for the first time may find in you their greatest Friend and only Saviour.*

*May they be faithful to you and your Church Sunday by Sunday, and reverently receive you in Holy Communion with thankfulness and joy.*

*We pray also for their families and friends, that they may find in the Church strength, comfort and companionship, and seek to know and to serve you with ever more devotion. Amen.*





**Adoremus in æternum sanctissimum Sacramentum**

Let us adore for ever the most holy Sacrament

# Sunday Reflections

Reflections, readings and prayers  
for the Sundays in April and May, and for Ascension Day*3rd April***2nd Sunday of Easter  
Time ('Divine Mercy')****'My Lord and my God!'**

'THE MEN and women who came to believe in the Lord increased steadily' – that is, they came to believe in Jesus' resurrection. We're told this in today's first reading; and then, in

the second reading (from Revelation) we hear Jesus' proclamation: 'I am the Alpha and Omega, the Living One.'

Today's Gospel tells how Jesus appeared to his apostles on the very evening of his resurrection. He appeared without any need for the doors to be opened. To dispel any impression that he was a ghost, he showed them his wounded hands and side. He greeted them: 'Peace be with you' (which may remind us of the salutation, *Salaam aleikum*). Jesus' greeting dispelled the fear and shame the apostles must have been feeling for behaving so disloyally during their Master's sufferings. Jesus now restored the intimacy between himself and his apostles. And he went on to 'breathe on them', bestowing on the apostles the power to forgive sins in his name – the power he has given to all his priests to this very day.

The scene switches to a week later. Once again, the apostles were assembled. Thomas was there (he had been absent the week before). He was saying he wouldn't believe that Jesus had broken the power of death unless he could see the nail-marks in Jesus' hands. Jesus appeared, and showed Thomas his hands. Thomas at once cried out: 'My Lord and my God!'

In our hearts at Mass we echo Thomas when the priest raises the Host: 'My Lord and my God!' We have not yet seen the risen Jesus face-to-face, but we encounter him at the altar and in those we love and those we meet day by day.

**Collect**

GOD of everlasting mercy, who, in the very re-occurrence of the paschal feast kindle the faith of the people you have made your own, increase, we pray, the grace you have

bestowed; that all may grasp and rightly understand in what font they have been washed, by whose Spirit they have been reborn, by whose Blood they have been redeemed...

**Readings:** Acts 5:12-16. Psalm 118:2-4,22-27. Response: Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his love has no end. Revelation 1:9-13,17-19.

**Gospel acclamation:** Alleluia...Jesus said, 'You believe because you can see me. Happy are those who have not seen, and yet believe.'

**Gospel:** John 20:19-31

**Prayer over the Offerings**

ACCEPT, O Lord, we pray, the oblations of your people, that, renewed by confession of your name and by Baptism, they may attain everlasting happiness...

**Preface:** ...in this time, above all to laud you yet more gloriously, when Christ our Passover has been sacrificed. For he is the true Lamb who has taken away the sins of the world; by dying he has destroyed our death, and by rising, restored our life. Therefore, overcome by paschal joy, every land, every people exults in your praise...

**Prayer after Communion**

GRANT, we pray, almighty God, that our reception of this paschal Sacrament may have a continuing effect in our minds and hearts...

*10th April*  
**3rd Sunday  
of Easter Time****'It is the Lord!'**

LIKE their Master, Jesus, the apostles suffered (though in a less absolute way) for proclaiming the Kingdom. Jesus had empowered them to tell the good news to everyone; and for this they were arrested. 'We are witnesses,' Peter told the High Priest. The authorities warned the apostles not to preach any more in the name of Jesus, and then released them. The apostles were

**Easter Prefaces**

**Preface I:** see *Easter Sunday, this page*

**Preface II** ...Through him the children of light rise to eternal life, and the halls of the heavenly kingdom are thrown open to the faithful; for his Death is our ransom from death, and in his rising the life of all has risen.

**Preface III** ...He never ceases to offer himself for us, but defends us and ever pleads our cause before you: he is the sacrificial Victim who dies no more, the Lamb, once slain, who lives for ever.

**Preface IV**...For, with the old order destroyed, a universe cast down is renewed, and integrity of life is restored to us in Christ.

**Preface V** ...By the oblation of his Body, he brought the sacrifices of old to fulfilment in the reality of the Cross, and by commending himself to you for our salvation, showed himself the Priest, the Altar, and the Lamb of sacrifice.

'glad to have had the honour of suffering humiliation for the sake of Jesus' name'.

The apostles were glad, as earlier they'd been glad to find their risen Master by the Lake of Tiberius. They'd kept together, as Jesus had instructed them, and gone back to their old job of fishing. When they found Jesus having breakfast, Peter cried, 'It is the Lord!' Joyfully, he leapt from the boat into the lake. That's the sort of joy we all need!

Then Peter was tested. Just as he'd denied Jesus three times during his Master's trial, so now Jesus asked him three times, 'Simon, son of John, do you love me?' Peter put himself into Jesus' hands: 'Lord, you know I love you.' This is what we all should say, from the heart, to Jesus, our Lord and Saviour.

### Collect

MAY your people exult for ever, O God, in renewed youthfulness of spirit, so that, rejoicing now in the restored glory of our adoption, we may look forward in confident hope to the rejoicing of the day of resurrection...

**Readings:** Acts 5:27-32,40-41. Psalm 29:2,4-6,11-13. Response: I will praise you, Lord; you have rescued me. Revelation 5:11-14.

**Gospel acclamation:** Alleluia... Lord Jesus, explain the scriptures to us. May our hearts burn within us as you talk to us.

**Gospel:** John 21:1-4

### Prayer over the Offerings

RECEIVE, O Lord, we pray, these offerings of your exultant Church, and as you have given her cause for such great gladness, grant also that the gifts we bring may bear fruit in perpetual happiness...

**Easter Preface:** see bottom of the opposite page

### Prayer after Communion

LOOK with kindness upon your people, O Lord, and grant, we pray, that those you were pleased to renew by eternal mysteries may attain in their flesh the incorruptible glory of the resurrection...

## 17th April 4th Sunday of Easter Time

### The Good Shepherd

OUR Sunday Gospel readings since Easter Sunday have told of Jesus' appearances to the apostles after his resurrection. Now, on this fourth Sunday, we consider Jesus as the Good Shepherd. In the Old Testament, God himself was named as the shepherd of his chosen people. Kings and priests were also described as shepherds or pastors. So when, as related in St John's Gospel, Jesus spoke of himself as the shepherd, the gate to the sheepfold, and the shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep, the apostles would have well understood.

Jesus (in today's Gospel) assured all his hearers that as the Good Shepherd he knew each one of his followers, and gave them eternal life.

We do well to read the whole of St John chapter 10 before or after today's Mass. And we should pray especially today



for our shepherds Pope Francis, Bishop Robert and the priests of our diocese. We pray, too, for vocations to the priesthood and the religious life. We pray for ourselves, that whatever our personal vocation we may follow Christ faithfully, and so enter the eternal life he has promised us.

### Collect

ALMIGHTY ever-living God, lead us to a share in the joys of heaven, so that the humble flock may reach where the brave Shepherd has gone before...

**Readings:** Acts 13:14,43-52. Psalm 98: 1-3,5. Response: We are his people, the sheep of his flock. Revelation 7: 9,14-17.

**Gospel acclamation:** Alleluia... I am the good shepherd, says the Lord; I know my sheep and my own know me.

**Gospel:** John 10:27-30

### Prayer over the Offerings

GRANT, we pray, O Lord, that we may always find delight in these paschal mysteries, so that the renewal constantly at work within us may be the cause of our unending joy...

**Easter Preface:** see bottom of opposite page

### Prayer after Communion

LOOK upon your flock, kind Shepherd, and be pleased to settle in eternal pastures the sheep you have redeemed through the Precious Blood of your Son...

## 24th April 5th Sunday of Easter Time

### The new commandment

ST JOHN devotes chapters 13 to 17 of his Gospel to recounting Jesus' teaching at the Last Supper. The Gospel readings on these three last Sundays of Easter Time come from this teaching. Today we hear how Jesus told his disciples that he was giving them a new commandment. They were to love one another. Love of neighbour had already been commanded in the Old Testament (Leviticus 19:18). Love of neighbour ordered in the Law of Moses did also in some way extend to one's enemies (Exodus 23:4-5). So what was 'new' about Jesus' commandment? Jesus told the disciples to love one another as he had loved them. And Jesus' love was unconditional; absolutely limitless. On the cross, his love embraced even his enemies. Yes: Jesus commands us to love our enemies (Matthew 5:43-44).

It probably seems to us impossible to follow Jesus entirely in this respect. Like most people - Christian or otherwise - we put our own safety, our own needs, our own pleasures, before the safety, needs and pleasures of others.

We may love others in a theoretical way, we may try to 'forgive those who trespass against us', but in practical, everyday ways we're often selfish and even resentful. So if we want to obey Christ we have to learn, maybe the hard way, that the journey towards the Father demands love and sacrifice on our part. May the saints encourage us. Many of them had to learn the hard way.

As early as the 2nd century, the writer Tertullian remarked that people who saw how Christians lived could declare, 'See how they love one another!'



Is that how people see us when we leave church after Mass? How they see us in our family circle? How they see us in the neighbourhood? How they see us in our place of work?

### Collect

ALMIGHTY ever-living God, constantly accomplish the Paschal Mystery within us, that those you were pleased to make new in Holy Baptism may, under your protective care, bear much fruit, and come to the joys of life eternal...

**Readings:** Acts 14:21-27. Psalm 144:8-13. Response: I will bless you name for ever, O God my King. Revelation 21:1-5.

**Gospel acclamation:** Alleluia...Jesus said, 'I give you a new commandment: love one another, just as I have loved you.'

### Prayer over the Offerings

O GOD, who by the wonderful exchange effected in this sacrifice has made us partakers of the one supreme Godhead, grant, we pray, that as we have come to know your truth, we may make it ours by a worthy way of life...

**Easter Preface:** *see bottom of page 14*

### Prayer after Communion

GRACIOUSLY be present to your people, we pray, O Lord, and lead those you have embued with heavenly mysteries to pass from former ways to newness of life...

## 1st May 6th Sunday of Easter Time

THROUGH his suffering, death and resurrection, Christ prepared a heavenly place - not just for his fellow Jews, but for everyone, over the centuries, who has believed in him. In the early days of the Church it seemed to some followers of Jesus that non-Jewish converts needed to adopt Jewish practices as in the Law of Moses. But in Jerusalem the apostles and elders decided, with the help of the Holy Spirit, not to burden converts with such restrictions.

We turn to today's Gospel. Speaking to his apostles at the Last Supper, Jesus knew that he was about to enter into glory through suffering, and that he was soon to leave this world. Yet he told the apostles not to be troubled or afraid. 'I have told you this before this happens, so that when it happens you may believe.' The apostles were no doubt puzzled. They certainly didn't know what was to befall Jesus that very night. But Jesus assured them of his love for them, and offered them his peace. 'If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him.'

This is an assurance of peace for all of us. Wishing someone peace is admirably common among Jews and Arabs, and among our Muslim brothers and sisters. And in the Mass, before Communion, the priest wishes us the peace of Christ - a necessary condition for worthily sharing in the Holy Sacrifice.

The peace which Christ gives us transcends the peace of the world (Matthew 10:34-37). In Ephesians 2:14 we read: 'Christ is our peace.' So let us ask for ourselves, through Christ, the



blessing of Aaron (Numbers 6 24-26): 'May the Lord bless you and keep you; may his face shine upon you; may he look upon you with kindness, and give you his peace.'

### Collect

GRANT, almighty God, that we may celebrate with heartfelt devotion these days of joy, which we keep in honour of the risen Lord; and that what we relive in remembrance we may always hold to in what we do...

**Readings:** Acts 15:1-2,22-29. Psalm 66:2-3,5-6,8. Response: Let the peoples praise you, O God, let all the peoples praise you. Revelation 21:10-14,22-23.

**Gospel acclamation:** Alleluia...Jesus said, 'If anyone loves me he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we shall come to him.'

**Gospel:** John 14:23-29.

### Prayer over the Offerings

MAY our prayers rise up to you, O Lord, together with the sacrificial offerings, so that, purified by your graciousness, we may be conformed to the mysteries of your mighty love...

**Easter Preface:** *see bottom of page 14*

### Prayer after Communion

ALMIGHTY ever-living God, who restore us to eternal life in the Resurrection of your Son, increase in us, we pray, the fruits of this paschal Sacrament, and pour into our hearts the strength of this saving food...

## Wednesday evening, 4th May

### Vigil of the Ascension

#### Collect

O GOD, whose Son today ascended to the heavens as the apostles looked on, grant, we pray that in accordance with his promise we may be worthy for him to live with us always on earth, and we with him in heaven...

**Readings, Gospel acclamation and Gospel:** *as in the Ascension Day Mass in the opposite column*

#### Prayer over the Offerings

O GOD, whose only-begotten Son, our High Priest, is seated ever-living at your right hand to intercede for us, grant that we may approach with confidence the throne of grace and there obtain your mercy...

**Preface** *as for Ascension Day Mass, opposite column*

#### Prayer after Communion

MAY the gifts we have received from your altar, Lord, kindle in our hearts a longing for the heavenly homeland, and cause us to press forward, following in our Saviour's footsteps to the place where for our sake he entered before us...



## Thursday 5th May The Ascension of the Lord

ASCENSION Day comes forty days after Easter Sunday (though in some dioceses it is celebrated on the following Sunday). At the Last Supper, and after his resurrection, Jesus



promised his apostles the gift of the Spirit. Then, forty days after the resurrection, 'he parted from them' (Mark 16:19; Luke 24:51).

Ascension Day celebrates this earthly parting of Jesus and his exaltation to the right hand of the Father. He had assured his little band of followers, 'Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow me afterwards.' (John 13:36). He went on to say: 'If I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, so that where I am you may be also.' (John 13:36). Jesus' ascension was an essential element in God's saving plan for all mankind ***Ascension Day is therefore a holiday of obligation.***

### Collect

GLADDEN us with holy joys, almighty God, and make us rejoice with devout thanksgiving; for the Ascension of Christ your Son is our exaltation, and where the Head has gone before in glory, the Body is called to follow in hope...

or GRANT, we pray, almighty God, that we, who believe that your Only Begotten Son, our Redeemer, ascended this day to the heavens, may in spirit dwell already in heavenly realms...

**Readings:** Acts 1:11. Psalm 46:2-3,6-9. Response: God goes up with shouts of joy; the Lord goes up with trumpet blast. Hebrews 9:24-28; 10:19-23 (or Ephesians 1:17-23).

**Gospel acclamation:** Alleluia...Go, make disciples of all nations. I am with you always, even to the end of time.

**Gospel:** Luke 21:46-53

### Prayer over the Offerings

WE offer sacrifice now in supplication, O Lord, to honour the wondrous Ascension of your Son: grant, we pray, that through this most holy exchange we, too, may rise up to the heavenly realms...

**Preface...**for the Lord Jesus, the King of glory, conqueror of sin and death, ascended to the highest heavens, as the angels gazed in wonder. Mediator between God and man, Judge of the world and Lord of hosts, he ascended, not to distance himself from our lowly state, but that we, his members, might be confident of following where he, our Head and Founder, has gone before...

or... for after his Resurrection he plainly appeared to all his disciples and was taken up to heaven in their sight, that he might make us sharers in his divinity...

### Prayer after Communion

ALMIGHTY ever-living God, who allow those on earth to celebrate divine mysteries, grant, we pray, that Christian hope may draw us onward to where our nature is united with you...

8th May  
7th Sunday  
of Easter

### To the ends of the earth

AT Mass on Ascension Day, the Gospel reading reminded us that before leaving his apostles Jesus commissioned them to preach the forgiveness of sins in his name 'to the ends of the earth'. That preaching was begun by the apostles and has been carried further 'to the ends of the earth' by their successors to



this very day.

But the process is not complete. Many people have not heard of Jesus. Some don't know or understand his teaching. Some turn away from him or are indifferent.

The challenge to us is to peacefully promote Christ's kingdom in our day, wherever we are. We may derive hope and encouragement from today's Gospel, where Jesus prays that his apostles may be at one with him and the Father, and so partake of glory. Jesus' prayer embraces all mankind, because he invites everyone to become friends of God. Let us pray for the gifts of the Holy Spirit, so that we may enthuse others with the faith, hope and love given to us by our Lord Jesus.

### Collect

GRACIOUSLY hear our supplications, O Lord, so that we, who believe the Saviour of the human race is with you in your glory, may experience, as he promised, until the end of the world, his abiding presence among us...

**Readings:** Acts 7:55-60. Psalm 96:1-2,6-7,9. Response: The Lord is king, most high above all the earth. Revelation 22:12-14, 16-17, 20.

**Gospel acclamation:** Alleluia...I will not leave you orphans, says the Lord; I will come back to you, and your hearts will be full of joy...

**Gospel:** John 17:2-0-26

### Prayer over the Offerings

ACCEPT, O Lord, the prayers of your faithful with the sacrificial offerings, that through these acts of devotedness we may pass over to the glory of heaven...

**Easter Preface** see bottom of page 14; or the Preface of the Ascension (see Ascension Day on previous page) may be used.

### Prayer after Communion

Help us, O God our Saviour, and grant us confidence, that through these sacred mysteries there may be accomplished in the body of the whole Church what has already come to pass in Christ her Head...

## Pentecost

WE all enjoy birthdays, and here is the birthday of the Christian family throughout the world: over a billion Catholics and many millions of Orthodox, Anglican and Protestant brothers and sisters. The chorus of praise from souls enthused by Christ and the Holy Spirit began in Jerusalem after Christ's ascension. There, huge, excited crowds had gathered to celebrate the Jewish feast of Pentecost - thanksgiving for the harvest and the inauguration of the Jewish nation by Moses. On this day the Holy Spirit descended on the little group of apostles, as Jesus had promised. At once, they began to proclaim the Good News to everyone who would listen. Jesus Christ is risen, and offers salvation to all who call on him! From these tiny beginnings, the message spread.

We, today's Church, heirs to the apostles, can best celebrate Pentecost by re-committing ourselves to the Gospel.





## Saturday evening, 14th May Vigil Mass of Pentecost

### Collect

ALMIGHTY ever-living God, who willed the Paschal Mystery to be encompassed as a sign in fifty days, grant that from out of the scattered nations

the confusion of many tongues may be gathered by heavenly grace into one great confession of your name...

or

GRANT, we pray, almighty God, that the splendour of your glory may shine forth upon us, and that, by the bright rays of the Holy Spirit the light of your light may confirm the hearts of those born again by your grace...

**Readings:** Genesis 11: 1-9 or Exodus 19:3-8,16-20 or Ezekiel 37:1-14 or Joel 3:1-5. Psalm 103:1-2,24,27-30,35. Response: Send forth your spirit, O Lord, O Lord, and renew the face of the earth. Romans 8:22-27

**Gospel acclamation:** Alleluia...Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love...

**Gospel:** John 7:37-39

### Prayer over the Offerings

POUR out upon these gifts the blessing of your Spirit, we pray, O Lord, that through them your Church may be enthused with such love that the truth of your saving mystery may shine forth for the whole world...

**Preface:** see Mass for Pentecost Sunday, below.

### Prayer after Communion

MAY these gifts we have consumed benefit us, O Lord, that we may always be aflame with the same Spirit whom you wondrously poured out on your apostles...

## 15th May Pentecost Sunday

### Collect

O GOD, who by the mystery of today's great feast sanctify your whole Church in every people and nation, pour out, we pray, the gifts of the Holy Spirit across the face of the earth, and with the divine grace that was at work when the Gospel was first proclaimed, fill now once more the hearts of believers...

**Readings:** Acts 2:1-11. Psalm 103:1,24,29-31,34. Response: Send forth your spirit, O Lord, O Lord, and renew the face of the earth. Romans 8:8-17.

### Sequence

HOLY Spirit, Lord of light, from the clear celestial height thy pure beaming radiance give.

Come, thou Father of the poor, come with treasures that endure; come, thou light of all that live!

Thou, of all consolers best; thou, the soul's delightful guest, dost refreshing peace bestow.

Thou in toil art comfort sweet; pleasant coolness in the heat; solace in the midst of woe.

Light immortal, light divine, visit thou these hearts of thine, and our inmost being fill.

If thou take thy grace away, nothing pure in man may stay; all

his good is turned to ill.

Heal our wounds, our strength renew; on our dryness, pour thy dew; wash the stains of guilt away.

Bend the stubborn heart and will; melt the frozen, warm the chill; guide the steps that go astray.

Thou, on us who evermore thee confess, and thee adore, thy sevenfold gifts descend.

Give us comfort when we die, give us life with thee on high; give us joys that never end.

### Latin version

*Veni, creator Spiritus. mentes tuorum visita, imple superna gratia, quae tu creasti pectora.*

*Qui diceris Paraclitus, altissimi donum Dei, fons vivus, ignis, caritas et spiritalis unctio.*

*Tu septiformis munere, digitus paternae dexteræ. tu rite promissum Patris. sermone ditans guttura.*

*Accende lumen sensibus, infunde amorem cordibus, infirma nostri corporis, virtute firmans perpeti.*

*Hostem repellas longius, pacemque dones protinus; ductore sic te praevio, vitemus omne noxium.*

*Per te sciamus da Patrem, noscamus atque Filium, te utriusque Spiritum, credamus omni tempore.*

*Deo Patri sit gloria, et Filio qui a mortuis Surrexit, ac Paraclito, in saeculorum saecula.*

**Gospel acclamation:** Alleluia...Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love.

**Gospel:** John 14:15-16,23-26.

### Prayer over the Offerings

GRANT, we pray, O Lord, that, as promised by your Son, the Holy Spirit may reveal to us more abundantly the hidden mystery of this sacrifice, and graciously lead us into all truth...

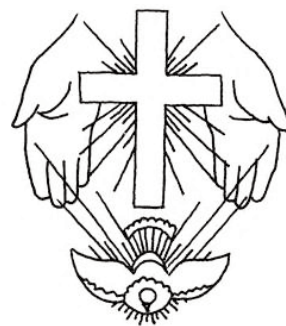
### Prayer after Communion

O GOD, who bestow heavenly gifts upon your Church, safeguard, we pray, the grace you have given, that the gift of the Holy Spirit poured out upon her may retain all its force, and that this spiritual food may gain her abundance of eternal redemption...

## Sunday 22nd May The Most Holy Trinity

ALL we've celebrated since Advent is summed up in today's proclamation that our Lord God is One in Three and Three in One, the ever-blessed and glorious Trinity.

The mystery of the Trinity isn't easy to understand (let alone explain to others!) The Church did not promulgate the dogma of the Trinity until the Council of Nicea (in modern-day Turkey) in 324. But truths about God's nature had been divinely revealed in earlier times. That God is One had been proclaimed by Moses and the prophets. We pray to God as the one Creator, and have been taught by Christ to address him as 'Our Father'. We have learnt from the apostles to pray also to God the Son - Jesus Christ, true God and true man. We know God's power and love through his Holy Spirit, the 'Lord and Giver of Life who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified'. The doctrine of the Trinity is the divine reality experienced by the whole Church since apostolic times.





**Collect**

GOD our Father, who by sending into the world the Word of truth and the Spirit of sanctification made known to the human race your wondrous mystery, grant us, we pray, that in professing the true faith, we may acknowledge the Trinity of eternal glory, and adore your Unity, powerful in majesty...

**Readings:** Proverbs 8:22-31. Psalm 8:4-9. Response: How great is your name, O Lord our God, throughout all the earth! Romans 5:1-5

**Gospel acclamation:** Alleluia... Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, the God who is, who was, and who is to come...

**Gospel:** John 16:12-15

**Prayer over the Offerings**

SANCTIFY by the invocation of your name, we pray, O Lord our God, this oblation of our service, and by it make of us an eternal offering to you...

**Preface...**for with your Only Begotten Son and the Holy Spirit you are one God, one Lord: not in the unity of a single person, but in a Trinity of one substance. For what you have revealed to us of your glory we believe equally of your Son and of the Holy Spirit, so that, in the confessing of the true and eternal Godhead, you might be adored in what is proper to each Person, their unity in substance, and their equality in majesty...

**Prayer after Communion**

MAY receiving this Sacrament, O Lord our God, bring us health of body and soul, as we confess your eternal holy Trinity and undivided Unity...

## Sunday 29th May Corpus Christi

IN the year 1264, in response to a request by the theologian St Thomas Aquinas, Pope Urban IV instituted the feast of Corpus Christi (the Body of Christ) as a day of thanksgiving for the Holy Eucharist.

We celebrate the institution of the Eucharist on Holy Thursday; but our thoughts during Holy Week are focused principally on Christ's passion and death. For this reason, Aquinas proposed a particular feast day when the faithful could learn more about the Blessed Sacrament and increase their devotion to it. And so today we rejoice that Jesus in



heaven lives within us through his Spirit, and comes especially to us in the Mass. The old Covenant of God with his people, proclaimed in the Old Testament, has become the New Covenant of the Body and Blood of Christ, our eternal High Priest.

Since Vatican II there has been an emphasis on love and unity among Catholics - a unity guaranteed mainly through our common love and adoration of Jesus Christ. This unity is above all signified by Jesus' gift of himself in Holy Communion. Let us never take the Mass and Holy Communion for granted. Rather, let us thank God that he provides for us a supreme way of worship and spiritual growth that leads us to heaven.

We pray especially for all the young people who are making their First Communion today, that they may grow ever-closer to our Lord in his body, the Church.

**Collect**

O GOD, who in this wonderful Sacrament has left us a memorial of your Passion, grant us, we pray, so to revere the sacred mysteries of your Body and Blood that we may always experience within ourselves the fruits of your redemption...

**Readings:** Genesis 14:18-20. Psalm 109:1-4, Response: You are a priest for ever, a priest like Melchizedek of old. Corinthians 11:23-26.

*The sequence Lauda Sion, or its short form, Pange lingua, may be sung or said.*

**Gospel acclamation:** Alleluia... I am the living Bread which has come down from heaven, says the Lord; anyone who eats this Bread will live for ever.

**Gospel:** Luke 9:11-17.

**Prayer over the Offerings**

GRANT your Church, O Lord, we pray, the gifts of unity and peace, whose signs are to be seen in mystery in the offerings we here present...

**Preface...**for he is the true and eternal Priest who instituted the pattern of an everlasting sacrifice, and was the first to offer himself as the saving Victim, commanding us to make this offering as his memorial. As we eat his flesh that was sacrificed for us, we are made strong; and, as we drink his Blood that was poured out for us, we are washed clean...

*An alternative Preface may be used*

**Prayer after Communion**

GRANT O Lord, we pray, that we may delight for all eternity in that share in your divine life which is foreshadowed in the present age by our reception of your precious Body and Blood...

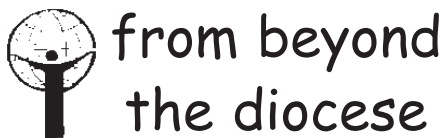
## The Pope's Prayer Intentions

**April**

- That small farmers may receive a just reward for their precious labour.
- That Christians in Africa may give witness to love and faith in Jesus Christ amid political-religious conflicts.

**May**

- That in every country of the world women may be honoured and respected, and that their essential contribution to society may be highly esteemed.
- That families, communities and groups may pray the Holy Rosary for evangelisation and peace.



## West African bishops urge Catholics to defend traditional marriage



**New president:  
Archbishop Kaigama**

THE ASSEMBLED bishops of the Regional Episcopal Conference of West Africa, meeting in February at Accra, called on Catholics to defend traditional marriage and the family.

In a statement issued on 28th February, the bishops undertook to support the culture of life against what they described as influences from other nations that are offered as keys to development.

They declared: 'We defend the inalienable dignity and rights of all persons, as children of God, created in his image and likeness. We must tutelage the rights of all, especially the most vulnerable in society such as those conceived (the unborn), the aged and the infirm through earthly life to natural death.'

'We in the Church uphold and defend that marriage is a gift of God created for man and woman, nothing more and nothing less, and that all human life is sacred and must be respected, accompanied and supported, protected and defended from the womb.'

The Regional Episcopal Conference of West Africa brings together English, French and Portuguese-speaking bishops of West Africa. About 120 cardinals, archbishops and bishops from 16 countries attended this year's meeting.

Archbishop Ignatius Kaigama of Jos, and President of the Bishops' Conference of Nigeria, was elected President of the conference. He takes over from Cardinal Théodore Adrien Sarr, Archbishop Emeritus of Dakar.

### Don't avoid politics

The conference also encouraged Catholics not to shy away from serving in political leadership, saying that such work is 'a duty that must be fulfilled in the spirit of Christ Jesus, who came not to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many.'

The bishops recommitted themselves to work for peace before, during and after political elections in the region, resolving to pursue inter-religious dialogue to promote peaceful co-existence with members of other religious traditions.

The President of Ghana, John Dramani Mahama, who attended the concluding Mass of the assembly, commended the bishops for addressing pastoral concerns and calling upon all people to be tolerant of each others' beliefs and cultures.

He described terrorism and religious extremism as threats to countries in the region, and called on Christians to come together in unity to overcome extremist influences.

The conference's next assembly will be held in 2019.

## World Youth Day: three months away

TWO and a half million people are expected to attend World Youth Day in Krakow, Poland, from 26th to 31st July.

The Archdiocese of Krakow is the former diocese of St John Paul II and home to the shrine of Divine Mercy, to which John Paul was greatly devoted.

St John Paul established World Youth Day in 1986.

The logo for World Youth Day 2016 shows a red and blue flame of Divine Mercy flowing from a gold cross surrounded by an outline of the map of Poland. A gold dot represents Krakow and symbolises youth.



The last international World Youth Day, which the Pope celebrated in Rio, in Brazil, in July 2013, ended with a Mass attended by three million people.

### Pope to visit Nazi death camp

While visiting Poland for World Youth Day, Pope Francis will visit Auschwitz concentration camp on Friday 29th July.

Between 1942 and 1944, over a million Jews, non-Jewish Poles, Soviet prisoners of war and gypsies were exterminated at the camp by the Nazis.

Auschwitz was the largest Nazi camp complex. The main camp, known as Auschwitz I, was expanded to include Auschwitz II in 1941 and Auschwitz III in 1942.

Among those exterminated were St Maximilian Kolbe, a Polish friar, and St Edith Stein, a Jewish philosopher who converted to Catholicism and became a Carmelite sister.

At Auschwitz, Francis will be following two of his predecessors. St John Paul II visited the camp in 1979 and Benedict XVI went there in 2006.

Auschwitz is setting aside days exclusively for World Youth Day pilgrims who want to tour the former death camp: 20th to 28th July and 1st to 3rd August.

### Other engagements

Pope Francis will visit Poland for five days, arriving on Wednesday 27th and leaving on Sunday 31st.

As well as charring World Youth Day and visiting Auschwitz, he will visit the Sanctuary of Divine Mercy in Lagiewniki and visit the Czestichowa shrine, attending Mass there to celebrate the 1050th anniversary of the introduction of Christianity to Poland.



**Prisoners at Auschwitz**



## Francis tells Russian Patriarch; 'We are brothers!'



AT CUBA airport on Friday 12th February Pope Francis met Patriarch Kirill, leader of the Russian Orthodox Church.

The Pope went on to visit Mexico and the Patriarch to Paraguay. The meeting was of tremendous significance, as this was the first meeting of a Pope and the Russian Patriarch since the 'Great Schism' (the break between the Western and Eastern Churches) in 1054.

'Finally!' Francis exclaimed in Spanish on meeting the Patriarch, embracing his fellow Christian leader. 'We are brothers.'

### 'Sign of hope'

In a joint declaration, the Pope and Patriarch declared: 'In a world which yearns not only for our words but also for tangible gestures, may this meeting be a sign of hope for all people of goodwill.'

The meeting has been described as a diplomatic victory for Pope Francis, who has made door-opening dialogue a prominent feature of his policy. Many Catholics and Orthodox have hailed the meeting as a significant step towards strengthening ties between their traditions.

Patriarch Kirill is not the leader of Orthodox Christianity, a title that belongs to the Ecumenical Patriarch, Bartholomew, who is based in Constantinople and has met Pope Francis and his predecessors several times. But with a flock of 150 million followers, Kirill leads the biggest branch of Orthodoxy.

The Vatican had tried for decades to meet Russian patriarchs, especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s. But Orthodox leaders have accused Catholics of trying to plant new churches in Russia and former Soviet satellite countries, which they regard as their territory.

The statement of the Pope and the Patriarch alluded to the tensions between their churches, acknowledging that Orthodox and Catholics 'have been divided by wounds caused by old and recent conflicts'. They said they were 'pained by the loss of unity' among Christians, who have splintered into innumerable denominations since the schism in 1054.

The continued persecution of Christians in the Middle East by terrorist groups reportedly prompted the Russians to meet their Catholic counterparts. 'We need to put aside internal disagreements at this tragic time and join efforts to save Christians in the regions where they are subject to the most atrocious persecution,' a senior Orthodox cleric, Metropolitan Hilarion, told reporters.

While pledging not to proselytise (seeking converts from each others' churches) Francis and Kirill said they are determined to 'undertake all that is necessary to overcome the

historical divergences we have inherited... We are not competitors, but brothers, and this concept must guide all our mutual actions as well as those directed to the outside world.'

### Seeking to heal the breach

Since his election in 2013 Pope Francis has sought to heal the breach between Catholics and the Russian Orthodox, telling Kirill in 2014: 'I'll go wherever you want. You call me, and I'll go.'

The meeting between the Pope and the Patriarch came less than a year after Francis' first visit to Cuba as Pope. He played a key role in the thawing of relations between the USA and Cuba, which last year re-established diplomatic ties.

### 300 million Orthodox

Worldwide, there are around 1.2 million Catholics. The fourteen autonomous Orthodox churches form the second-largest Christian community, with 300 million adherents.



## Mother Teresa to be canonised



BLESSED Mother Teresa of Calcutta will be canonised on Sunday 4th September at a Mass the day before the 19th anniversary of her death on 5th September 1997.

Last December Pope Francis approved a second miracle attributed to Mother Teresa's intercession.

The miracle was the healing of an engineer in Santos, Brazil, who was in a coma after being diagnosed with a viral brain infection that resulted in multiple brain abscesses.

## Death of Mother Angelica

THE FOUNDER of the world's largest television religious network, Mother Mary Angelica, died on Easter Sunday at the age of 92.

Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN) broadcasts Catholic programmes to over 258 million households in more than 145 countries.

Mother Angelica was born in Ohio in 1923. She entered the Poor Clares in Cleveland when she was 21, and joined other sisters to open a new monastery in Alabama in 1962.

Known to millions simply as 'Mother Angelica', she founded EWTN in 1981 with only \$200, beginning broadcasting from a studio in the monastery garage.

Mother Angelica had been in declining health since suffering a cerebral haemorrhage on Christmas Eve in 2001. She never regained her full speaking ability, and had other, less-severe, strokes through the years.

On 1st April ETWN broadcast Mother Angelica's funeral.



# 'I shall arise and return to my Father'

The Lent Pastoral Letter of Bishop ROBERT P. ELLISON  
delivered on Saturday February 2016 at the Pilgrimage of Reconciliation  
to Our Lady Queen of Peace, Kunkujang Mariama



*'It is only right that we should celebrate and rejoice, for this son of mine was dead, but is now alive; was lost, but now is found.'*

THE STORY of the Prodigal Son was told by Jesus because one day he was 'caught' dining with tax collectors and sinners. The Pharisees and Scribes murmured: 'This man welcomes sinners and even eats with them.'

*And so, Jesus replied:*

A man had two sons. The younger one said: 'Father, give me my share of our property.'

Here was a selfish young man who had no concern for his father or brother, who dared to ask for his share of the family property even before his father died.

The father gave it to him without saying a word.

A few days later, the young man went off to a distant country, and there squandered his money in loose living.

A severe famine came over that country. He got work caring for pigs, but had no allowance, not even the food for the pigs.

Then he came to his senses, thinking of life at home and of the servants, who had plenty to eat.

And so he repented: 'I will leave this place, go to my father and say to him: 'I have sinned against heaven and you; I no longer deserve to be called your son; please treat me as a simple servant.

'Yes: I shall arise and return to my Father.'

When was still a long way off, his father saw him, and was moved with pity. His father ran to him, and clasped him in an embrace.

## Lost and found

The son tried to make his confession, but it was useless. Little did he understand that he had a father that was so merciful and compassionate.

His father was already calling for the best robe, ring, sandals and the fatted calf.

'Let us eat and be merry,' he said, 'because this son of mine was dead, but is now alive; was lost, and now found.'

In the meantime, the elder son was coming home. He had been working in the fields and was tired after a day's hard work. He heard the noise of celebration and called a servant to explain. The servant told him: 'Your brother is back home.'

The elder son was very angry. His father came out to plead with him. The elder son replied: 'All these years I have worked hard for you; I never disobeyed you and you never gave me even a small goat to celebrate with my friends. As for this son of yours, he has wasted our property living with prostitutes; and now you give him the fatted calf!'

The father calmly addressed his son with affection: 'My dear son, you are always with me and all that is mine is yours. But it is only right that we celebrate and rejoice for your brother; he was dead and now he is alive; he was lost and now he is found.'

## So many questions...

And there ends the story...hanging with so many questions. Did the elder son ever repent?

Was he ever moved to make peace even with his father?

How did the younger son react when he heard how his elder brother had attacked his father?

The elder brother felt he had a right to complain that he was treated unjustly. We too find it so difficult to let go of our grievances in similar situations.

## A mother and Napoleon

A mother went on her knees begging for mercy for her son from the Emperor Napoleon. He was about to be executed for desertion from the army. The Emperor replied: 'But he doesn't deserve mercy, because of what he has done.'

The mother replied: 'If my son deserved it, it wouldn't be mercy!'

Here was a mother who understood the full meaning of that word *mercy* – just as the father acted in the parable.

## How we can quarrel

This story of the father and his two sons is a mini-example of how families can quarrel. It includes all kinds of communities: religious, priests, work-places, schools, parishes, committees, associations...

In this parable, the father is God – our God. Even God was hurt. Jesus wept over the city of Jerusalem knowing that he was about to be put to death because his own people would not accept him. The younger son was hurt because he felt



guilty. He was the cause of the family break-up. And the elder brother was hurt most of all - due to his own heart of stone.

### **Our opportunity**

In this time of Lent and in this special Year of Mercy we have just opened a Door of Mercy at the Shrine of Our Lady, Queen of Peace.

Today, let each of us say: God has given me a unique opportunity to open my heart to him; to stop hiding behind my wounds and hurts.

It is an opportunity to show my wounds to the Risen Lord to let his touch heal them. Jesus felt more at home with the tax collectors and sinners. They were more open and honest with him, in spite of their sins.

The Pharisees and Scribes found it very difficult to accept this. They preferred to say: 'Thank you, God, that I am not like the rest of men, like that publican at the back of the church.' They found it hard to accept that we are all both saints and sinners.

### **Openness calls for courage**

'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.' It takes courage to make an open and honest confession. It allows me to face up to my wrong-doing - the real reasons. By doing so, it also allows the priest to encourage us and to reassure us.

Please remember that the priest himself is a sinner, and probably no less a sinner than we are.

Fear and shame are part of life. It all began in the Garden of Eden, when Adam and Eve committed the first sin.

The first thing they did was to hide in the bushes because they were naked (exposed) and afraid. At that moment they broke their friendship or relationship with God, with each other, and within their own selves.

### **Paul's honesty**

St Paul openly confessed his own weakness to the Christians in Rome: 'The will to do what is good is in me, the power to do it is not; the good thing I want to do, I never do; the evil thing which I do not want, that is what I do.' (Romans 7:19).

Now is the favourable time, now is the day of salvation...repent and believe in the Good News. That Good News is that our God loves you just as you are...but he loves you so much that he wants to see you as even a better disciple of his.

### **We cannot walk by**

Recently, I read a report describing the tragic situation in Syria. The title of the report was: 'We cannot walk by on the other side'.

There is very little that we can do in a practical way to alleviate the terrible suffering of the Syrian people. However, the emphasis here is on the title of this report - the words, 'we cannot walk by'.

For Christians, if one part of the body of Christ suffers, the other parts are obliged to step in and help in whatever way possible. We can help (even from afar) by opening a door of mercy among ourselves and rebuilding relationships that have been wounded over time.

### **Bringing peace and happiness**

Yes, every time that two people reconcile and make peace with each other, they bring peace. If five, ten, twenty or fifty or more could do this during Lent, we begin to create a world of peace and happiness in our own homes and parishes.

In other words, if we first put our own houses in order, we can help others. By living in communion with the Spirit of the Risen Lord and with each other, the kingdom of God is near (or 'at hand'), and the kingdom of Satan is losing its impact.

The Spirit blows where he will among us here, but also as we pray for the victims in Syria. There is only one body of Christ - with its great variety of members. And we depend on each other.

May we never go through such an experience as the people of Syria are suffering. However, the recent winds of uncertainty and confusion in our own country could well be a call for us to rise up and stay awake. Let us listen to the signs of the times.

### **Building bridges**

Let us build more bridges of mercy among ourselves and with our God. This is what Pope Francis has been urging all men and women to do across the whole world. He is merely reminding us of the words of St John XXIII: our world needs 'the medicine of mercy'.

If we are to survive the challenges that lie ahead, each one of us has to take those steps necessary to live that word 'mercy, mercy, mercy....'

*Amen.*

*+ Robert P. Ellison  
Bishop of Banjul*

## **NEWS EXTRA**

# **'Nowhere in Syria is safe for children'**

UNICEF has called for unconditional access to children in Syria, including two million in besieged areas.

The UN children's agency warned that more than 80 per cent of Syria's children have been harmed by the conflict.

No place today is safe for Syria's children,' says Peter Salama, Unicef's Middle East director.

'A new and disturbing pattern of violations against children's rights has emerged in the conflict.'

Unesco reports that Syrian youngsters have been killed and maimed, boys under 15 have been forced into active combat,

and still others have been exposed to siege and starvation.

Nearly seven million children in Syria live in poverty and are potential targets for recruitment by armed groups, Mr Salama warns.

Unicef has called for unconditional and sustained access to children in Syria, including two million in besieged areas, stating: 'This generation is at grave risk. Almost three million of these children are out of school. If we don't have them educated, we won't have the next generation of people to rebuild Syria.'



Catholic Relief Services (CRS) reports that it has supported more than a million people affected by the Syrian conflict, mainly sheltering in neighbouring countries such as Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey.

### Faces behind the statistics

‘The scale of the suffering is devastating,’ says Kevin Hartigan, CRS regional director for Europe and the Middle East, who has overseen the response.

‘But as Pope Francis reminds us, there are human faces behind the staggering statistics. Each of the millions of displaced Syrians is an individual uprooted from a full life, a family member, a loved one.’

CRS, the US bishops’ international relief and development agency and a member of the international Caritas aid federation, has made education a priority for Syrian refugee children who have fled the conflict.

CRS and Caritas have set up education facilities for refugee children and have introduced a certification process that will allow them to return to their education system in Syria when the war is over.

These Catholic aid agencies have also provided psycho-social support and trauma healing to children exposed to the horrors of seeing loved ones killed and their homes destroyed. In addition to this support, food, clothing and medical care have been supplied to refugee children and their families.

### ‘End attacks on schools and hospitals’

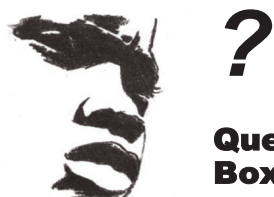
The Catholic agencies and the UN have called for an end to attacks on civilian infrastructure in Syria so that schools, hospitals and water supplies are kept safe.

They are also urging the immediate lifting of all sieges by all parties to the conflict.

Hind Kabawat, a Syrian Christian lawyer who attended the talks in Geneva, said: ‘We have to live in hope. This is the only thing we can do now. We don’t have other options.’

‘The other option is war, which is death to Syrian people.’

*Edited from the Catholic Herald, London*



### Question Box

**I know that Pentecost celebrates the descent of the Holy Spirit on the apostles in Jerusalem. But what are ‘Pentecostal churches’?**

PENTECOSTALISM is a Protestant movement that emphasises direct personal experience of God through baptism with the Holy Spirit. Like other forms of evangelical Protestantism, Pentecostalism adheres to the infallibility of Scripture and the necessity of accepting Christ as personal Lord and Saviour. It believes in spiritual gifts such as speaking in tongues and divine healing. Pentecostals see their movement as reflecting the same kind of spiritual power that was found among the first Christians.

Pentecostalism emerged in the USA in the early 20th century among adherents of the ‘Holiness’ movement who expected the imminent Second Coming of Christ. Believing that they were living in the ‘end times’, they expected God to renew the Church spiritually, bringing to pass the restoration of spiritual gifts and the evangelisation of the world.

In 1900, Charles Parham, an American evangelist and faith healer, began teaching that ‘speaking in tongues’ was the Biblical evidence of Spirit baptism. Pentecostalism spread throughout the United States and the rest of the world as visitors carried the Pentecostal experience back to their home churches or felt called to the mission field.

Comprising over 700 denominations and many independent churches, there is no central authority governing Pentecostalism, but many denominations are affiliated with the Pentecostal World Fellowship. There are over 279 million Pentecostals world-wide, and the movement is growing in many parts of the world, especially in developing nations.

Some Pentecostal beliefs concerning Spirit baptism and spiritual gifts have been embraced by non-Pentecostal Christians in Protestant and Catholic churches through the charismatic movement. But Catholic doctrines and practices are markedly different from those of Pentecostal churches.

### Answers to ‘Do you know?’ (page 5)

- 1 Three: Ruth, Judith and Esther
- 2 Poponguine, on the Petite Côte of Senegal, where the first pilgrimage was held in 1888
- 3 The Letter to the Hebrews
- 4 Kenya, Uganda and the Central African Republic
- 5 Chasuble: the outer vestment worn by the celebrant at Mass

### Don’t forget!

ASCENSION DAY, Thursday 5th May, is a Holy Day of Obligation, when all Catholics should attend Holy Mass





# BENDAVIA TRAVEL AGENCY LTD.

WE MAKE TRAVEL EASIER FOR YOU

CONTACT US AT OUR ULTRA-MODERN OFFICE COMPLEX  
AND BEGIN YOUR FLIGHT IN STYLE

*FOR ALL YOUR HOLIDAY AND BUSINESS TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS*

**\*\*ALL AIR TICKETS    \*\* WORLDWIDE TRAVEL / CONNECTIONS  
\*\* HOTELS WORLDWIDE    \*\* CAR HIRE    \*\* TRAVEL INSURANCE**

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Please Call Telephone: (220) 4495358 / 4495359 . Mobile : 7237046 / 9794110 / 6458435

Email: [bendaviatravel@yahoo.com](mailto:bendaviatravel@yahoo.com), [bendavia@qanet.gm](mailto:bendavia@qanet.gm)

website:[www.bendaviatravelagency.com](http://www.bendaviatravelagency.com)

## TALENT HOUSE

Do you want to sing, dance or learn how to play a musical instrument of your choice?  
Are you looking for a place where you could do your recordings on CD/DVD clips and  
make your adverts? Are you interested in creative bead-making, wirework jewellery,  
event-planning & decoration, interior design, gift-packaging & souvenirs,  
exquisite bridal-packaging, hat design and bridal make-over?

Visit us at TALENT HOUSE, Multimedia & Recording Studio (a subsidiary)  
Senegambia, Kololi, opposite Sarge's Hotel.

Telephone/Fax: (220) 4465773 /9200607/9308389/7489207/3997880

Email: [talenthouse2007@yahoo.com](mailto:talenthouse2007@yahoo.com)

Website: [exclusivehandmadebeadsandjewelries.blogspot.com](http://exclusivehandmadebeadsandjewelries.blogspot.com)

## HOT FM RADIO 104.3

Partners with Deutsche Welle (DW) Bonn Germany.

Garba Jahumpa Road  
Bakau New Town



*Enlightening Your World*

*Motto: Nil Desperandum*

Tel: 9278090 / 7654093/ 6126124 / 3486035

Email: [info@hotfmambia.gm](mailto:info@hotfmambia.gm) / [hotfmambia@gmail.com](mailto:hotfmambia@gmail.com)/ [www.hotfmambia.gm](http://www.hotfmambia.gm)

[www.hotfmambia.com](http://www.hotfmambia.com)

# Gambian Christian anniversaries

April and May

**100 YEARS AGO.** In the First World War, Fr GABRIEL SANNEH, Senegambian chaplain to Senegalese forces serving in France, was greatly respected as a priest who put his life at risk to bring the sacraments to the wounded and dying.

On 15th April 1916 he himself died of shrapnel wounds on the battlefield at the village of Passey, in northern France.

Fr Sanneh had been ordained at St Louis in 1902. From 1904 to 1907 he was attached to the Parish Church in Hagan Street, Banjul (now the Cathedral) as *Vicaire de la Paroisse*.



*Hagan Street Church  
in Fr Gabriel Sanneh's day*

**23rd April 1816 (200 years ago):** Captain Alexander Grant purchased Banjul Island from the King of the Kombos, and renamed it 'St Mary's Island'. The former Grant Street in Banjul was named after him.

**18th April 1848:** The first High Mass was celebrated in a converted room in Banjul.

**18th April 1849:** Bishop Aloysius Kobès bought a property in Daniel Goddard (Hagan) Street for 2,500 French francs.

**2nd May 1849:** Bishop Kobès blessed the foundation stone of the first Catholic chapel on the site of the present Cathedral.

**14th April 1850:** Four Sisters of the Immaculate Conception arrived from France to open a school for girls.

**11th April 1878:** Fr Renoux arrived to take over from Fr Reihl. He died less than 5 months later, on 5th October.

**1st April 1883:** The Immaculate Conception Sisters left Banjul, to be succeeded the following week by five Sisters of St Joseph of Cluny - one French, the others Irish.

**1st May 1931 (85 years ago):** Bishop Augustin Grimault visited Banjul to confirm 30 young people.



**4th May 1935:** Arrival of Sr Albert Byrne SJC (*left*) who was to serve in The Gambia almost continuously until her death in Banjul on 16th July 2001, aged 90.

**15th April 1936 (80 years ago):** Fr Harold Whiteside celebrated the first Mass at Old Jeshwang.

**9th April 1948:** Bishop Dodds of Casamance blessed the first St Therese's Church at Kanifing, now the parochial hall.

**13th April 1951 (65 years ago):** In Freetown, the Archbishop of Canterbury consecrated Rodney Norman Coote as Second Bishop of Gambia & Rio Pongas.

**15th April 1951 (65 years ago):** Fr Michael Moloney (later Bishop Moloney) was appointed first Prefect-Apostolic.

**8th April 1958:** Completion of the Bwiam mission house.

**4th May 1958:** Episcopal Ordination in Dublin of Fr Michael Moloney as first Bishop of Banjul.

**3rd April 1959:** Opening of Njongon Primary School

**24th April 1960:** Bishop Moloney blessed Star of the Sea Church Bakau.

**27th April 1960:** Fr Michael Frawley returned to Nigeria, having spent 7 years in charge of St Augustine's High School. His successor was Fr Michael Cleary (later Bishop Cleary).

**2nd April 1962:** Bishop Moloney blessed a bell at the Cathedral.

**9th April 1966 (50 years ago):** Following liturgical changes stemming from Vatican II, Bishop Moloney set up commissions on the liturgy, headed by Fr Hugh Fagan; ecumenism, Fr Michael Flynn; and the laity, Fr Seán Little.

**9th April 1972:** Archbishop Carroll of Monrovia consecrated the new St Therese's Church Kanifing.

**16th April 1979:** Departure of Fr McNally.

**4th April 1980:** Bishop Moloney announced his resignation, owing to ill health.

**5th April 1983:** The Cluny Sisters celebrated 100 years in The Gambia (*see 1st April 1883 opposite*) at the opening of the convent at Darsilami, with Sisters Elizabeth, Joseph and Philomena in residence.

**13th April 1985:** at the Independence Stadium, Bishop Michael Cleary ordained Anthony Gabisi and Peter Gomez as priests and David Jimoh Jarju and Edward Gomez as deacons (*see page 5*)

**12th April 1986 (30 years ago):** Ordination of Fr Edward Gomez (*see page 5*)

**26th April 1986 (30 years ago):** Ordination of Fr David Jimoh Jarju (*see page 5*)

**21st April 1989:** The renovated church at Bwiam was rededicated to Our Lady of Fatima.

**25th April 1992:** Opening of All Saints Brikama.

**17th April 1993:** Opening of St James Kandunkou.

**23rd April 1995:** Opening of Holy Rosary Lamin.

**5th April 1997:** Opening of St Matthew Barra.

**10th April 1999:** Ordination by Bishop Cleary of Fr Joseph Kabo and Fr Michael Ndecky.

**21st April 2001:** Opening of St Peter & St Paul Albreda.

**18th May 2004:** Death aged 85 in Aix-en-Provence, France, of Cardinal Thiandoum, Archbishop of Dakar 1962-2000.

**6th April 2006 (10 years ago):** Death of Margareta Edenius (*see page 30*)

**14th May 2006, St Matthias' Day (10 years ago):** Episcopal Ordination of the Rt Revd Robert Ellison CSSp (*see page 6*)

**1st April 2007 - Palm Sunday:** Bishop Ellison blessed the Chapel of Perpetual Adoration at St Therese's Kanifing.

**28th April 2007:** Bishop Emeritus Michael Cleary opened the Anne-Marie Javouhey Academy Brusibi.

**29th April 2007:** Opening of the Church of Blessed Teresa of Calcutta Mariamakunda.

**11th-23rd April 2008:** in Nairobi, Kenya, Bishop Ellison attended the Pastoral Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue.

**25th May 2008:** Death in Dakar of Monsignor Pierre Sagna CSSp, Bishop Emeritus of St Louis du Sénégal, who had spent his retirement in The Gambia at Holy Cross Church Brusibi.

**May 2008:** In Freetown, Bishop Ellison took part in the Bishops' Conference of The Gambia and Sierra Leone.



**20th April 2009:** Launching of the Network of Catholic Women's Associations.

**11th May 2009:** Brother Marcelin, Principal of the Lycée Sacré Cœur Ziguinchor, visited St Peter's Senior Secondary School Lamin with 11 teachers and 84 pupils.

**24th May 2009:** The Methodist Mission achieved autonomy from the parent mission in Britain.



**2nd May 2009:** President Yahya Jammeh invested Bishop Ellison as Commander of the Order of the Republic of The Gambia (CRG).

**April 2010:** *Ad limina* visit to Rome of Bishop Ellison and his brother bishops of

Sierra Leone and Liberia.

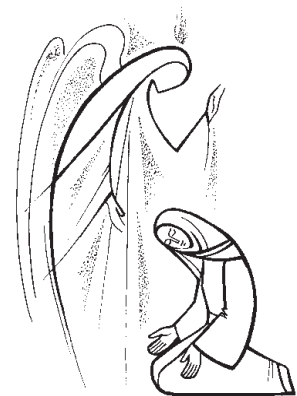
**9th May 2015:** As part of Cathedral Centenary celebrations, the Third Diocesan Dinner was held at the Kairaba Beach Hotel.

**31st April 2015:** Death in Dublin of Fr Matthias Murphy CSSp (see page 30)

**10th May 2015:** Sr Marie J. Mendy, the only Gambian sister of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, made her perpetual profession.

**End of May 2015:** After serving in The Gambia since 1967, Fr Michael Casey CSSp returned finally to Ireland.

Pray daily with the world-wide Church: Morning Prayer, Mass and Evening Prayer Visit [Universalis.com](http://Universalis.com)



## Some weekday celebrations in April and May

### Monday 4th April: The Annunciation of the Lord

THIS year, Good Friday was observed on the day usually assigned to the Annunciation, so the celebration of the angel Gabriel's appearance to Mary (Luke 1:26-38) has been transferred to today. Mary freely accepted God's will, conveyed by Gabriel, that she should become the mother of God's incarnate Son. Our redemption in Christ stems from Mary's assent; and we pray that, aided by Mary's prayers, we too may seek to follow God's will. As Mary said at the marriage in Cana: 'Do whatever he tells you.' (John 2:5). A beautiful old name for this feast is 'Lady Day'.

### Friday 23rd April: St George martyr

THERE are many legends about the 3rd-century soldier, St George, patron of Greece, Portugal, and the Italian cities of Genoa and Venice. In 1222 George was declared patron of England. He is the patron of the Scout movement. Schools in Basse are named after him, and the bell at Holy Spirit Banjul is named 'St George'.

### Monday 5th April: St Mark evangelist

THE GOSPEL attributed to St Mark is the shortest of the four Gospels, and probably the first to be written. John Mark was a cousin of St Barnabas. It was at his mother's house in Jerusalem that the disciples assembled (Acts 12:12). Mark travelled with Barnabas and Paul to Cyprus (Acts 12:25; 13:13; 15:26-39). He left them there, but later helped Paul when he was in prison in Rome. Tradition says that Mark's Gospel was based on Peter's reminiscences.

### Friday 29th April: St Catherine of Siena doctor of the Church

CATHERINE was born in Siena, Tuscany (now part of Italy). In 1363 she joined the Dominican Order, becoming known for her asceticism. Her writings include four treatises on religious mysticism. She wrote: 'Be what God meant you to be, and you will set the world on fire!' Catherine died on 29th April 1389 and was canonised in 1461.



### Monday 2nd May: St Athanasius doctor of the Church

ATHANASIUS was born in 293 at Alexandria, Egypt. In 325 he took part in the first Council of the Church in Nicæa (now Iznik, in Turkey). The council condemned Arianism, a heresy which denied Christ's divinity.

In 328 Athanasius was appointed Patriarch of Alexandria, but in 336 theological disputes led to his first banishment. He repeatedly returned from exile and resumed his office. But in 356 he was banished by the Emperor Constantine, and withdrew to Upper Egypt, where he wrote theological works. Constantine's death in 361 gave Athanasius a respite; but renewed controversy forced him to flee into the Theban desert. At the time of his death in 373, Athanasius was again in possession of his diocese.

\* *The Athanasian Creed, which defines the Persons of the Trinity, and is accepted by Catholics, Orthodox, Anglicans and most Protestants, was not actually written by Athanasius.*



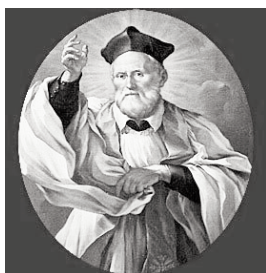
### Friday 13th May: Our Lady of Fatima

FROM May to October 1917 in Fatima, central Portugal, three peasant children reported having seen visions of a woman who called herself 'The Lady of the Rosary'. On 15th October, after the children had again seen the vision, a crowd of around 70,000 witnessed an amazing solar phenomenon. The first national pilgrimage took place in 1927. Over the years, a good many Gambians have visited Fatima on pilgrimage.

**Saturday 14th May: St Matthias apostle**

AS told in Acts 1:21-36, Matthias replaced Judas Iscariot following Judas' betrayal of Jesus and his subsequent suicide. Matthias' calling as an apostle is unique, because he was not appointed directly by Jesus, who had ascended, and he was chosen before the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the infant Church. Matthias was present with the other apostles at Pentecost.

We pray today for our Bishop Robert, episcopally ordained on St Matthias' Day 2006.

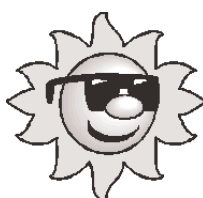
**Thursday 26th May: St Philip Neri**

PHILIP Neri, known as the Second Apostle of Rome, was born in 1515. He was ordained at the age of 35. Gathering young people together for spiritual exercises, he found himself leading a group of priests who wished to live together not bound by vows but united in charity in an institution called the Oratory. Philip was the friend of cardinals and popes, and noted for his preaching, modesty and humour. He died in 1595 and was canonised in 1622. Since then, other oratories have been founded.

**Friday 27th May: St Augustine of Canterbury**

AUGUSTINE was the first Archbishop of Canterbury, in England. He was born in 6th-century Rome, and became a Benedictine friar. Pope Gregory I sent Augustine and 40 missionaries to England. They arrived in 597. Augustine converted King Ethelbert of Kent and many of his subjects. On the Pope's instructions, he purified many pagan temples and consecrated 13 other bishops. He died in 604.

We pray today for the Governors, Principal, staff and pupils of St Augustine's Senior Secondary School.

***Fee moi  
Gambia*****Bon appétit**

WE should all be glad, I think you'll agree, that enterprising Gambians are setting up businesses large and small, particularly in areas hitherto ignored or neglected.

For some time now, those who like yoghurt, honey and jam don't need to buy imported items, but can enjoy first-class Gambian products, not to mention sowe and chakri.

A good many people are trying to avoid taking too much sugar. I do hope the jam-makers are considering the use of artificial sugar to produce (for those who want or need it) an alternative, so-called 'diabetic' jam.

**Can you hear me?**

CONCERN about the poor condition of many people's teeth is not limited to dentists. Worried, too, are many parents and the families of those who suffer toothache, loss of teeth, and big bills for dental treatment. I suppose that many of us don't brush our teeth every night and morning as we should; and that we ingest much too many sugary foods.

But I sometimes also wonder about the state of our *hearing*, especially where young people are concerned.

It's not only at family celebrations and in nightclubs that music is often played so loudly that conversation is impossible. The result, if not actually ear-splitting, can well affect the normal ability to detect sound.

Aided by today's all-too-efficient sound systems, the fashion among the young is for noise, noise, noise – as though being deafened is actually enjoyable.

No wonder some children don't seem to be able to listen in the classroom... unless they're shouted at.

**Away with dead grass!**

SET-SETTAL is a wonderful and necessary thing – as long as most of us take part. But the response, whether on official set-settal Saturdays or on any other days, is fitful.

Many people, however polluted the streets and paths near where they live, don't bother to spend even a short time clearing up the unsightly mess. Instead, they blithely add to it.

Passing along a highway the other day, I noticed that litter was much worse where there was dead vegetation. Those good people who do sometimes take care to clear litter should also remove dead grass and remains of bushes and other plants which trap paper and other detritus.

I do salute the authorities for banning plastic bags. Already we see that the environment is (in some places, at least) looking tidier.

But check-out staff in supermarkets are still offering bags. The other day I bought a small packet of biscuits which the check-out lady promptly put into a paper bag. 'What do I want this bag for?' I asked.

Cannot check-out staff be instructed to ask, whatever we are buying, 'Do you want a bag?'

And if we want a bag, shouldn't we pay for it?

**Key question**

THE OTHER day a European visitor asked me, in what seemed a spirit of genuine enquiry, 'How can you possibly believe in a God?'

He was about to say goodbye, and I couldn't think of a one-sentence answer that would have set him thinking. Even if I'd had twenty minutes to engage him in conversation, I might well have failed to give his question a thought-provoking answer.

How often do we have the opportunity to talk positively about the faith that means so much to us?

And how often do we make the most of our opportunity?

**Kaadu Dunda Gi - the Living Word**

Every Sunday at 1 pm, GRTS

# Daily Mass Readings



Sunday readings Year C Weekday readings Year 2

**Fri 1st April**  
**Sat 2nd**

Acts 4:1-12. Psalm 117:1-2,4,22-27. John 21:1-14  
Acts 4:13-21. Psalm 117:1,14-21. Mark 16:9-15

**Sun 3rd**  
**Mon 4th**

Acts 5:12-16. Psalm 117:2-4,22-27. Revelation 1:9-13,17-19. John 20:19-31  
Isaiah 7:10-14; 8:10. Psalm 39:7-11. Hebrews 10:4-10. Luke 1:26-38

Tue 5th  
Wed 6th  
Thu 7th  
Fri 8th  
Sat 9th

Acts 4:32-37. Psalm 92:1-2,5. John 3:7-15  
Acts 5:17-26. Psalm 33:2-9. John 3:16-21  
Acts 5:27-33. Psalm 33:2,9,17-20. John 3:31-36  
Acts 5:34-42. Psalm 26:1,4,13-14. John 6:1-15  
Acts 6:1-7. Psalm 32:1-2,4-5,18-19. John 6:16-21

**Sun 10th**  
Mon 11th  
Tue 12th  
Wed 13th  
Thu 14th  
Fri 15th  
Sat 16th

Acts 5:27-32,40-41. Psalm 29:2,4-6,11-13. Revelation 5:1-14. John 21:1-19  
Acts 6:8-15. Psalm 118:23-24,26-27,29-30. John 6:22-29  
Acts 7:51-8:1. Psalm 30:3-4,6-8,17,21. John 6:3-35  
Acts 8:1-8. Psalm 65:1-7. John 6:35-40  
Acts 8:26-40. Psalm 65:8-9,16-17,20. John 6:44-51  
Acts 9:1-20. Psalm 116:1-2. John 6:52-59  
Acts 9:39-42. Psalm 115:12-17. John 6:60-69

**Sun 17th**  
Mon 18th  
Tue 19th  
Wed 20th  
Thu 21st  
Fri 22nd  
Sat 23rd

Acts 13:14,43-52. Psalm 99:2-3,5. Revelation 7:9,14-17. John 10:27-30  
Acts 11:1-18. Psalm 41:2-3 & 42:3-4. John 10:1-10  
Acts 11:19-26. Psalm 86:1-7. John 10:22-30  
Acts 12:24 - 13:5. Psalm 66:2-3,5,6,8. John 12:44-50  
Acts 13:13-25. Psalm 88:2-3,21-22,25,27. John 13:16-20  
Acts 13:26-33. Psalm 2:6-11. John 14:1-6  
Acts 13:41-52. Psalm 97:1-4. John 14:7-14

**Sun 24th**  
Mon 25th  
Tue 26th  
Wed 27th  
Thu 28th  
Fri 29th  
Sat 30th

Acts 14:21-27. Psalm 144:8-13. Revelation 21:1-5. John 13:31-35  
1 Peter 5:5-14. Psalm 88:2-3,6-7,16-17. Mark 16:15-20  
Acts 14:19-28. Psalm 144:10-13,21. John 14:27-31  
Acts 15:1-6. Psalm 121:1-5. John 15:1-8  
Acts 15:7-21. Psalm 95:1-3,10. John 15:9-11.  
Acts 15:22-31. Psalm 56:10-12. John 15:12-17  
Acts 16:10. Psalm 99:2-3,5. John 15:18-21.

**Sun 1st May**  
Mon 2nd  
Tue 3rd  
Wed 4th  
**Thu 5th**  
Fri 6th  
Sat 7th

Acts 15:1-2,22-29. Psalm 66:2-3,5-6,8. Revelation 21:10-14,22-23. John 14:23-29  
Acts 16:11-15. Psalm 149:1-6,9. John 15:26 - 16:4  
Corinthians 15:1-8. Psalm 18:2-5. John 14:6-14. St PHILIP & St JAMES  
*Morning Mass:* Acts 17:15,22 - 18:1. Psalm 148:1-2,11-14. John 16:12-15 (*In the evening:* Mass of Ascension Day)  
Acts 1:1-11. Psalm 46:2-3,6-9. Hebrews 9:24-28 & 10:19-23 or Ephesians 1:17-23. Luke 24:46-53 **ASCENSION DAY**  
Acts 18:9-18. Psalm 46:2-7. John 16:20-23  
Acts 18:23-28. Psalm 46:2-3,8-10. John 16:23-28

**Sun 8th**  
Mon 9th  
Tue 10th  
Wed 11th  
Thu 12th  
Fri 13th  
Sat 14th

Acts 7:55-60. Psalm 96:1-2,6-7,9. Revelation 22:12-14,16-17,20. John 17:20-26  
Acts 19:1-8. Psalm 67:2-7. John 16:29-33  
Acts 20:17-27. Psalm 67:10-11,20-21. John 17:1-11  
Acts 20:28-38. Psalm 67:29-30,33-36. John 17:11-19  
Acts 22:30; 23:6-11. Psalm 15:1-2,5,7-11. John 17:20-26  
Acts 25:13-21. Psalm 102:1-2,11-12,19-20. John 21:15-19  
or for Fatima: Isaiah 61:9-11. Psalm 44:11-12,14-17. Luke 11:27-28  
Acts 1:15-17,20-26. Psalm 112:1-8. John 15:9-17

**Saturday evening, 14th VIGIL of PENTECOST: details, page 17**

**Sunday 15th PENTECOST SUNDAY: details, page 18**

**Ordinary Time ('the green season') resumes**

Mon 16th  
Tue 17th  
Wed 18th  
Thu 19th  
Fri 20th  
Sat 21st

James 3:13-18. Psalm 18:8-10,15. Mark 9:30-37  
James 4:1-10. Psalm 54:7-11,23. Mark 9:30-37  
James 4:13-17. Psalm 48:2-3,6-8,10-11. Mark 9:38-40  
James 5:1-6. Psalm 48:14-20. Mark 9:41-50  
James 5:9-12. Psalm 102:1-4,8-9,11-12. Mark 10:1-12  
James 5:13-20. Psalm 140:1-3,8. Mark 10:13-16

(St John I)

(St Bernadine of Siena) *abstinence*  
(St Christopher Magallanes or of the BVM)

**Sun 22nd**  
Mon 23rd  
Tue 24th  
Wed 25th  
Thu 26th  
Fri 27th  
Sat 28th

Proverbs 8:22-31. Psalm 8:4-9. Romans 5:1-5. John 16:12-15  
1 Peter 1:3-9. Psalm 110:1-2,5-6,9-10. Mark 10:17-27  
1 Peter 1:10-16. Psalm 97:1-4. Mark 10:28-31  
1 Peter 1:18-25. Psalm 147:12-15,19-20. Mark 10:32-45  
1 Peter 2:2-5,9-12. Psalm 99:2-5. Mark 10:46-52 St  
1 Peter 4:7-13. Psalm 95:10-13. Mark 11:11-25  
Jude 17,20-25. Psalm 62:1,3-6. Mark 11:27-33

(St Bede or St Gregory VII or St Mary Magdalene de' Pazzi)  
Philip Neri  
(St Augustine of Canterbury) *abstinence*  
(of the BVM)

**Sun 29th**  
Mon 30th  
Tue 31st

Genesis 14:18-20. Psalm 109:1-4. 1 Corinthians 11:23-26. Luke 9:11-17  
2 Peter 1:2-7. Psalm 90:1-2,14-16. Mark 12:1-12  
Zephaniah 3:14-18 or Romans 12:9-16. Psalm Isaiah 12:2-6. Luke 1:39-56

## April & May

Celebrations in brackets ( ) are optional

**FRIDAY in the EASTER OCTAVE**  
**SATURDAY in the EASTER OCTAVE**

**2nd SUNDAY of EASTER (Divine Mercy)**  
**ANNUNCIATION of THE LORD**  
(St Vincent Ferrer)

St John Baptist de la Salle  
*abstinence*

**3rd SUNDAY of EASTER**  
(St Stanislas)

(St Martin I)

*abstinence*

**4th SUNDAY of EASTER**

(St Anselm)  
*abstinence*  
(St George or St Adalbert)

**5th SUNDAY of EASTER**  
St MARK

(St Peter Chanel or St Louis Grignion de Monfort)  
St Catherine of Siena *abstinence*  
(St Pius V)

**6th SUNDAY of EASTER**  
St Athanasius

**7th SUNDAY of EASTER**  
(St Nereus & St Achilleus or St Pancras)  
(Our Lady of Fatima) *abstinence*

**7th SUNDAY of EASTER**

(St Nereus & St Achilleus or St Pancras)  
(Our Lady of Fatima) *abstinence*

St MATTHIAS

**THE MOST HOLY TRINITY**

**CORPUS CHRISTI**

PRESENTATION of MARY



End-  
piece

## In memoriam



**On her last visit: Margareta Edenius with Sister Philomena**

## From Sweden with love

Tuesday 6th April 2006, Mrs Margareta Edenius, benefactor of Catholic schools in The Gambia, died at the age of 92.

Almost fifty years earlier she and her husband - she a teacher and he a headmaster -

decided to offer accommodation to an African student. They expected a Kenyan, but instead it was a young Gambian who came to stay with them.

In 1970 Margareta and her husband spent a fortnight in The Gambia. Their identification with schools and children in this country was immediate. It blossomed into an association which has been of incalculable benefit, above all in Kunkujang Mariama, where in 1973 she began a school for just a couple of children under a tree.

Today, after so much help from Margareta and her well-established support group in Sweden - and of course assistance from the authorities and others - Kunkujang Mariama can boast of the original kindergarden, a basic cycle school and a senior school.

Margareta's good work continues. For 55 years the organisation she established in Sweden has raised funds to help schools with books and equipment and provide scholarships. She also initiated and assisted other projects, including the provision of ploughs, oxen and housing.

Among Margareta's many friends in The Gambia was Fr Jack Sharpe. She and he were true 'partners in development' in and around the parish of Kunkujang Mariama. Margareta also enjoyed a friendship with Satang Jow, who before she became Minister of Education was Principal of Gambia High School.

During her last visit to GPI, in November 2005, Margareta reminisced about her association with this country. She spoke of her husband, who died in 1990, as being very quiet, but equally stalwart and involved. Any disappointments and setbacks, she said, were best forgotten. Instead, she spoke appreciatively of her many friends in educational development in The Gambia and in Sweden.

Many of the young Gambians who benefited from Margareta's pioneering efforts here in the early days are now parents or grandparents.

Margareta Edenius was, and will long remain, a model for those who seek to live the Christian calling by offering loving, enterprising help to others.

## Forthright preacher and teacher

MEMORIES are still green (the Irish colour!) of Fr Matthias Murphy CSSp, who died on 31st April last year in Dublin. Most appropriately, the day of his passing was Good Shepherd or Vocations Sunday.

Five years earlier, Fr Murphy had announced at Holy Spirit Banjul that after more than 30 years as Parish Priest he was about to retire - just as, three years earlier, he had retired from teaching at St Augustine's Senior Secondary School.

Back in 1968, the Church of the Holy Spirit had been opened to complement the provision at the Cathedral. The then Catholic population of Banjul was growing. It was in 1975, following Fr John Hogan, Fr Michael Murray and Fr Frank Leahy, that Fr Murphy became Parish Priest.

In subsequent years the Catholic population of Banjul began to decline as many Catholic families moved away to Fajara and elsewhere. But Holy Spirit, notable for Fr Murphy's preaching and its musical tradition, continued to attract Catholics who made an effort to travel to Banjul for Sunday Mass.

Fr Murphy was known for his forthright views on almost every subject, but above all on the Catholic Church and on education.

He gave his congregation something to talk about or argue

about after Mass. As an extempore preacher he usually grabbed attention with his very first words. There would be humour. There would be hard-hitting comments on the ignorance or lack of get-up-and-go among some Christians.

Fr Murphy saw to it that Sunday Mass at Holy Spirit embraced traditional practices such as the creed and preface in Latin and several Latin settings of the Mass (though the Baati Linguere choir also had - and has - a wide repertoire, including various Masses in local languages).

Generations of pupils at St Augustine's remember Fr Murphy as a challenging teacher who used the same techniques as in his church sermons to keep them responsive in the classroom.

### Long service

Matthias Murphy was born in January 1933 in County Cork, Ireland, and brought up in County Kerry. Some of his many brothers and sisters (seven boys and seven girls) died young. Matthias was the only boy to become a priest.

After ordination in 1961, Fr Murphy began his service as a missionary priest of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit (Spiritans) in the Caribbean.

He was then sent to south-eastern Nigeria - for many years a power-house of Catholic missionary activity.



From 1966 to 1970 Nigeria suffered a traumatic civil war as elements in the south-east sought to secede from the Federal Republic and establish the Republic of Biafra. Following Biafra's defeat, many Spiritan priests were expelled.

Four of them were transferred to The Gambia.

Fr William Fitzpatrick and Fr Patrick O'Connor arrived in November 1970, and Fr Murphy and Fr Michael Frawley in January 1971.

Fr Murphy served in Basse and Fulabantang before taking up teaching at St Augustine's and becoming Parish Priest at Holy Spirit.

### Impact in the classroom

Over the years, many St Augustine's many of Fr Murphy's pupils rose to prominent positions in government, public administration, business and the professions. The respect with which many Muslims regard the Catholic Church stems from their time at St Augustine's. They have many memories of the particular impact of Fr Murphy.

He ceased teaching at the school in 2007.

In April 2010 President Jammeh honoured Fr Murphy and Fr Michael Casey with membership of the Order of the Republic of The Gambia (MRG).

When he retired as Parish Priest in 2010, Fr Murphy moved to Lamin. In July the following year, while visiting Dublin,

he celebrated with eleven other Spiritan priests the golden jubilee of their ordination.

### Fruits of missionary endeavour

In retirement, Fr Murphy returned to The Gambia, but increasing ill health led to his reluctant retreat to Ireland for medical treatment. By the time Fr Murphy finally left this country, the local Catholic Church had grown considerably since his arrival in 1971, when no Gambian priest was serving in the diocese. He could give thanks that Irish missionary efforts over many years had led to the growth of Gambian vocations to the priesthood, many of them stemming from his tutelage at St Augustine's.



Outside the church he loved



- ✓ 3 TO 5 YEARS OF SAVING MAKES YOU HAVE ENOUGH BLOCKS FOR YOUR HOME.
- ✓ HIGH QUALITY BLOCKS GUARANTEED.
- ✓ INTEREST PAID IN BLOCKS WHEN YOU SAVE FOR 12 MONTHS
- ✓ WE SEND OUT MONTHLY STATEMENTS OF BLOCKS SAVED.

**"Start Saving Blocks Towards your House on a Monthly Basis"**

**GAMBIA'S FIRST CEMENT BLOCK SAVING SCHEME**

**START BUILDING YOUR HOME FOR AS LOW AS D500 TO D5,000 A MONTH**



Info@amiscus.gm - [www.amiscus.gm](http://www.amiscus.gm) - 9901813, 7051233, 3908784  
Centenary House (Opposite Castle Petrol Station - Westfield) 3rd Floor, Westfield, KSMD, The Gambia





## The feeding of the five thousand

**J**ESUS welcomed the crowds and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed to be cured. The day was drawing to a close, and the twelve came to him and said, 'Send the crowd away, so that they may go into the surrounding villages and countryside, to lodge and get provisions, for we are here in a deserted place.'

But he said to them, 'You give them something to eat.' They said, 'We have no more than five loaves and two fish – unless we are to go and buy food for all these people.' For there were about five thousand men.

And Jesus said to his disciples, 'Make them sit down in groups of about fifty each.' They did so, and made them all sit down. And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and blessed and broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. And all ate and were filled. What was left over was gathered up, twelve baskets of broken pieces.

*Luke 9:11-17*

*The Gospel for Corpus Christi, Sunday 29th May*

This Gospel reading exemplifies the absolute, limitless love of Jesus for everyone. His heart was moved with compassion for the vast crowd. He miraculously fed them - at least five thousand. In fact, he provided more than was needed.

Our God, through Jesus, is always generous far beyond our deserving. He knows our needs even before we mention them to him.

The 'feeding of the five thousand' may be seen as a metaphor for the Mass, where God feeds his people with 'bread from heaven'. While the world endures, and the Mass endures, Christ will always feed his faithful people.





