

PARISH OF ST. JOHN HENRY NEWMAN MORECAMBE

5th May 2024 – Sixth Sunday of Easter

Parish Clergy

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Parish office hours: Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 9 am till 12 Noon

GOSPEL REFLECTION:

Today's Gospel follows immediately after the Gospel proclaimed last week, in which Jesus taught that he was the vine and that his disciples were the branches. In the example of the vine and the branches, we learned that our union with Jesus will lead to fruitful service. Today's reading extends this teaching to describe the kind of service that Christians are called upon to offer to others.

When John wrote this Gospel, his community was influenced by a set of religious beliefs called Gnosticism. It appears that one of John's intentions was to distinguish Christian belief from the beliefs held by the Gnostics. Evidence of this can be found in today's Gospel.

One of the tenets of Gnostic teaching was the importance of knowledge, or *gnosis*, as the determining aspect of faith. We read today's Gospel as a response to this teaching. In John's Gospel, we hear Jesus affirm that he is known by the Father and that his disciples will know the Father by knowing Jesus. In this passage, however, Jesus reminds his disciples that this knowledge is to be expressed in love. Those who know Jesus well - and Jesus says that his disciples do know him - will love one another. Knowledge leads to love, which leads to action. John reminds his community that Jesus taught that love is the sign of a true disciple and, thus, a true Christian. Even more, a true disciple shows a particular kind of love, sacrificial love.

In the Greek, there are two words for love that are used in this passage. The first is *agape*. The second is *philia*. The first word is most often used to describe love for other persons and for God. It is understood as the highest and most perfect kind of love. The second word is used to describe the affection of friendship. In this context, John appears to use these words as synonyms. The root of the Greek word for friend comes from this second term for love, *philia*. By using this word, Jesus transforms the terms of his relationship with his disciples and redefines for them their relationship with God. In the Hebrew Scriptures, faith in God made one a servant of God.

Here Jesus teaches that his relationship to his disciples is based on friendship, not servitude. Another aspect of Gnostic belief taught that a believer was an elect person, chosen and set apart from the world. John reminds his community that Jesus also taught that a disciple is one who had been chosen - one who had been chosen by Jesus. To be chosen by Jesus, however, is not to be set apart from the world. Instead, to be chosen by Jesus is to be sent to serve the world as he did. The disciples of Jesus were chosen and were sent into the world to bear fruit by serving others, by sacrificing for others, in love.

This reading, like last week's, is part of Jesus' Last Supper discourse. In the context of John's Gospel, these words are spoken before Jesus' Crucifixion. We read his instruction to the disciples in light of his death and Resurrection. We know that Jesus himself gives us the greatest example of the kind of love and service that he teaches to his disciples. He has, in fact, laid down his life for his friends, for his disciples, and for us. Through his death and Resurrection, we have received the grace to love others as Jesus has commanded.

MASS INTENTIONS:

Saturday 4/05	St Mary's St Patrick's	10.00am 6.00pm	Margaret Heath Get Well Maria Villarejo RIP
Sunday 5/05	St Mary's St Mary's	8.30am 10.30am	Holy souls and forgotten souls Sapphire Amanda Abbott RIP
Tuesday 7/05	St. Patrick's	9.45am	Arthur Holman RIP
Wednesday 8/05	St. Mary's St Patrick's	10.00am 7.00pm	Baby Marshall II and Leo Arthur Rev Anthony Ingham RIP
Thursday 9/05 The Ascension of the Lord	St Mary's	12.10pm	Elizabeth Lane RIP
Friday 10/05	St Patrick's	10.00am	Ted and Karen Case Wedding Anniversary
Saturday 11/05	St Mary's St Patrick's	10.00am 6.00pm	Lucia Maria Manton – 21 st Birthday The Sharkey Family RIP
Sunday 12/05	St Mary's St Mary's	8.30am 10.30am	Gladys Tyson RIP Allan Mitchell RIP

Please note that the Mass at Tuesday 7th May will be at 9.45 a.m. at St Patrick's. Please note that the Masses for The Ascension of the Lord will be at 7.00 p.m. on Wednesday 8th May at St Patrick's and 12.10 p.m. on Thursday 9th May at St Mary's.

FEAST DAY:

Thursday 9th May is The Ascension of the Lord. Please note it is a Holy Day of Obligation.

Next Sunday is **World Communications Day of Prayer.** There will be a retiring Collection for the Catholic Media.

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK: Eamonn Rowan, Maria Ruscillo, Irene Benson, Archbishop Patrick Kelly, Dean Brownlee, Davina Tetteh, Edgardo Hecate, Dee Rowley, Mary Walsh, Pam (Mary) Clark, Rev Jim Murphy, Winnie Coupe, Zoe Jarman, Karen Guerrero, Win Cowell, Tony Manley, Jennifer Doherty and the sick and housebound in the parish and those in local hospitals and nursing homes.

1ST ANNIVERSARIES: Please pray for Anne Curwen, Elizabeth Maguire, Sheila Margaret Higgins and Patrick Brosnan and all those whose first anniversaries occur between 5th and 12th May and all those names on the anniversaries' list for May which is on the noticeboard in each church porch.

EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT:

Wednesday 9.30 a.m. till 9.55 a.m., followed by 10.00 a.m. Mass, Thursday 11.00 a.m. till 12 noon followed by the 12:10 pm. Mass and Saturday 10.30 a.m. till 11.00 a.m. We are blessed to have adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Please make use of this great devotion by coming along and spending some time in quiet prayer with Jesus.

WEEKLY COLLECTION: £1234.04

ATTENDANCE: 392

Parish Survey Results

Question 4: Are you already helping in the local community? If not, would you like to volunteer to be involved?

Response of parish council member.

	Response	Involved		Barriers	Offers	Notes
		Church	Community			
1	Already helping, warm space, flowers and choir	*				
2	Already helping	*				Not specific
3	Not enough energy now. Used to.					
4	In the wider community		*			Not specific
5	In my 80s. have spent my lifetime helping in the community. Now feel past it.			Age		
6	Local community volunteer. Homeless, Warm space, SVP Reader	*	*			
7	Pre COVID when younger very involved. Now less fit.			Age/Fitness		
8	Already helping in local community		*			Not specific
9	Volunteer in various places wider community		*			Not specific
10	I have managed piety stall at St. Mary's to continue if required 10 years. Husband now runs things at 10.30 mass. Happy to continue	*				
11	Already helping with Royal Airforce Association		*			
12	SVP member but not feeling very involved.	*		Not feeling very involved		
13	Already part of refreshment team and children's liturgy group. Would be nice with more volunteers for these groups.	*				Would like more help where already contributing.
14	Age barrier, get tired easily but would like to help more.			Age		
15	Yes, just with childcare issues.	*		Childcare		Not specific
16	Was helping with LIFE in Morecambe but they closed down.					Could be open to helping
17	Those days are passed now.			Age		
18	Yes, I volunteer in local community, hope to find time for more involvement.		*			Could be open to helping
19	Ageing parish. Needs younger people to fill the inevitable gaps.			Age		
20	Warm space and Parkrun, Morecambe					
21	Carer for husband no free time			Full time carer		
22	Taking communion to housebound	*				
23	I help 4 elderly households.		*	Carer		
24	Volunteer driver for Cancer Care Ambassador for St John's Hospice		*			
25	Yes, Legion of Mary	*				
26	Already involved. Willing to be a welcomer at 8.30am mass	*			Welcomer at 8.30 Mass	Could be more specific

There were 27 responses – ten were already involved with church, nine with the community but only one person in both categories although I believe there is least one other person in both.

Main reason given for no involvement is age (five), followed by carer/childcare (three).

Four people expressed interest in becoming more involved but not always specific about how. Others (three/four) could be open to involvement but were quite vague in their responses.

Overview from Fr Darren

We are very blessed in our parish to have many volunteers, currently we have over 80 volunteers, who volunteer in so many ways. Some carry out multiple tasks, while others carry out single tasks with a broad commitment. Some tasks take as little as 30 minutes while others commit to longer periods of time, some up to nine hours per week. Our parish only functions the way it does due to the volunteers giving of their time. Of course, as time goes on and people get older, they are no longer able to volunteer, which means that we constantly need new people to volunteer for the good of the parish. If you feel that you can volunteer in the parish, please contact the office who will be able to help with any questions you might have.

YOUR CHURCH NEEDS YOU!

VOLUNTEER



MANY THANKS TO ALL THOSE WHO ALREADY VOLUNTEER

PARISH NEWS

WELCOME TO OUR PARISH: If you are new to the area, or are visiting us just for the weekend, you are very welcome! Please introduce yourself to Fr Darren or Deacon John.

CONFIRMATION: There will be preparation meetings on Saturday 11th May 2024, 1pm – 3pm and on Saturday 18th May 2024, 1pm – 3pm in the Newman Centre for those preparing for Confirmation. Our young people will receive the Sacrament of Confirmation at 2pm on Pentecost Sunday (19th May 2024) at the Cathedral, Lancaster.

ST PATRICK'S CHURCH: Work will begin this week with the installation of ventilation vents to help with air circulation in the main body of the church and the sacristy. We hope that once this work is completed we will no longer have issues with condensation. Work will then commence on the removal of all the cracking paintwork. Once this has been removed we can then assess the condition of the plaster and make a decision on what the next steps will be.

EVENTS:

PLAYGROUP: Every Monday 10.00 a.m. - 11.30 a.m. in the Newman Centre. There are lots of activities for the children and singing at the end of the session. The cost is £2 which includes a snack. Tea and coffee are available for adults. Everyone is very welcome. We look forward to seeing you there!

Please note that there will be no Playgroup on Monday 6th May 2024 due to the Bank Holiday.

MOTHERS' MAYHEM: We run on a Thursday, 9.30 a.m. to 10.30 a.m. in the Newman Centre. This is a fun, dance session with your children but if you don't have children you are still very welcome to join us. The cost of the session is £2.00.

AFTERNOON SOCIAL: Our first afternoon social will take place on Thursday 16th May, 1.00 – 3.30 p.m. in the Newman Centre. Music (Irish, 60's and 70's, requests welcome) and chat. All are very welcome to attend.

SVP MEETING: The next meeting of the SVP will take place on Thursday 16th May at 7.00 p.m. in the Newman Centre.

DONATION FROM BINGO: John Hayes recently presented CancerCare with a cheque for £110.00 from funds raised at the Bingo afternoons.

ST JOHN'S HOSPICE: The Parish has received a letter from St John's Hospice thanking us for our donation from the proceeds of the Soup Afternoon.

QUIZ NIGHT: Thank you to those who attended the recent Quiz Night. We raised £133.36. Thanks to the question setters and those who read the questions.

REGULAR EVENTS:

Day	Time	Event	Location
Every Sunday	After 10:30am Mass	Tea and Coffee	Newman Centre
Every Monday	10.00am–11:30am	Playgroup	Newman Centre
Every Tuesday	10.00am	Legion of Mary	St Patrick's
Every Wednesday	12noon–2.00pm	Warm Welcome	Newman Centre
Every Thursday	9.30am – 10.30 am	Mother's Mayhem	Newman Centre
Every Friday	2.00pm-3.00pm	Lectio Divina	St Mary's Presbytery
Tuesday 7 th May	1:30pm	Bingo	St Patrick's
Monday 13 th May	10:30am–12noon	Cuppa and Chat	St Patrick's
Thursday 16 th May	1.00 – 3.00 p.m.	Afternoon Social	Newman Centre
Thursday 16 th May	7.00 p.m.	SVP Meeting	Newman Centre
Monday 20 th May	1.00–3.00pm	Friendship Group	Newman Centre

THE POPE'S INTENTION FOR MAY:

FOR THE FORMATION OF RELIGIOUS, MONKS, NUNS AND SEMINARIANS

The Pontiff urges prayers "so that religious, monks, nuns, and seminarians may grow in their vocational journey through human, pastoral, spiritual, and communal formation, leading them to be credible witnesses of the Gospel.

"The soul who walks towards God and does not shake off his worries or control his passions is like someone pushing a cart uphill."
(St. John of the Cross)



ASCENSION OF THE LORD



The Ascension

This week is our liturgical celebration of the Ascension of the Lord, when Jesus was taken to heaven on the fortieth day after Easter. In Cycle B, our Gospel is taken from the conclusion of the Gospel of Mark. Scholars have long noted some irregularities about the ending of Mark's Gospel. There is a natural break in the story line at verse 8, when Mark's report of the discovery of the empty tomb comes to an abrupt conclusion.

This verse reports that the women were so frightened by what they had seen at the tomb that they told no one. This may be the original ending of Mark's Gospel, but it is also possible that the more complete ending has been lost.

Some manuscripts of Mark's Gospel, written between the fourth and ninth centuries, include what scholars have termed the Shorter Ending. This is often printed in our Bibles for reference. This ending indicates that the women told their story to Peter's companions. Scholars believe that this ending is not original to Mark. They theorise that this ending was added by copyists who sought to resolve the original abrupt ending at verse 8.

Other early manuscripts include a Longer Ending that scholars also believe was written by someone other than the Evangelist. Nonetheless, quotations from this Longer Ending are found in the writings of the early Church Fathers, and it was accepted at the Council of Trent as part of the canonical Gospel of Mark. Our Gospel for today's celebration of the Feast of the Ascension is taken from this Longer Ending.

There are similarities in the reports of Jesus' Ascension found in the Synoptic Gospels Mark, Matthew, and Luke. In each case, Jesus assigns his disciples the task of proclaiming the gospel message to the entire world. There are also notable distinctions. In the Gospels of Mark and Matthew, the disciples are sent by Jesus to baptize and to preach. In Luke's Gospel, however, the commission to baptize is absent. Instead, Jesus directs the disciples to return to Jerusalem to await the fulfilment of his promise to send them the Holy Spirit. Curiously, only the Gospels of Mark and Luke actually report Jesus' ascension into heaven. Matthew's Gospel concludes with Jesus' promise to remain with his disciples forever. Only the Gospel of Mark notes that Jesus ascended to sit at the right hand of God. In noting this, Mark teaches that Jesus' ascension affirms the glory Jesus received from God after his death and Resurrection.

Even if this ending to Mark's Gospel was written by someone other than the Evangelist, in the commission that Jesus gives to his disciples, there are elements that are quite typical of Mark's Gospel. The signs that will accompany belief in Jesus are as vivid as the action performed by Jesus during his ministry. Those who believe in Jesus will be empowered to do what Jesus himself has done. During his ministry, Jesus sent his disciples to preach, to heal, and to drive out unclean spirits. Now they are sent again to do these things and more. From his place with God in heaven, Jesus helped his disciples, and he continues to help us as we try to live as his followers.

OTHER NEWS:

SAVE THE DATE: Sue Grubic invites you to save the date! **Saturday, 12th October 2024.** Lancaster Diocese Faith and Justice Commission will be holding an event at the Lancaster Cathedral Social Centre, Balmoral Road Lancaster, LA4 3BT. Speakers will include: **Bishop Paul Swarbrick, Sir John Battle and Clare Dixon** from CAFOD. I know this seems a long time away but please put this date in your diaries. More details to follow in the Summer edition of Mouthpeace but do feel free to contact me if you would like to register your interest to come. ldfjsue@gmail.com or by text on 07791444417.

CAFOD: With a UK general election due sometime this year, politicians will be looking for our votes. We have a responsibility as Catholics to make sure that parties commit to tackling issues such as poverty and injustice. Raising our voices and contacting parliamentary candidates as a parish community will send a strong signal to those standing for election in our local constituencies. A Year of Encounter is a joint initiative between CAFOD and St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP), equipping Catholics to ask key questions of local candidates at the key moments. Please see www.cafod.org.uk/encounter for more information.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

You are my refuge, O Lord;
you fill me with the joy of salvation.

SAVE THE DATE:

CREAM TEA: Our next Cream Tea Afternoon will take place on Saturday 22nd June 2024, 2.00 – 4.00 p.m. Tickets will be £6 per person.



SUMMER FAIR: Our Summer Fair will take place on Saturday 6th July 2024, 12.00 noon – 2.00 p.m. Summer draw tickets will be available in the coming weeks. If anyone wants to run a stall please contact the office.

