

The Parish of St. Edward the Confessor
Registered Charity no. 234025

Father Peter Cryan

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Newsletter for the week of 21st April 2024

Sunday Readings Cycle B

Weekday Readings Cycle II

Readings for the 4th Sunday of Easter Acts 4:8-12; Psalm 117; 1John 3:1-2; John 10:11-18

Saturday 20th April 5.30pm 1st MASS of the 4th SUNDAY of EASTER – Day of Prayer for Vocations

Sunday 21st April 10.30pm MASS of the 4th SUNDAY of EASTER - Day of Prayer for Vocations

Monday 22nd April

Tuesday 23rd April

Solemnity: ST. GEORGE, martyr, national patron

Wednesday 24th April 11.30am Mass (Optional: St. Adalbert, bishop, martyr) (St. Fidelis, priest, religious, martyr)

Thursday 25th April FEAST: ST. MARK, evangelist

Friday 26th April 11.30am Mass **Solemnity: Anniversary of the Dedication of St. Edward's**

Saturday 27th April 10.00am Mass

10.30-11.00am Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturday 27th April 8.00pm 1st Mass of 5th Sunday of Easter

Sunday 28th April 10.30am Mass of 5th Sunday of Easter

Readings for 5th Sunday of Easter Acts 9:26-31; Psalm 21; 1John 3:18-24; John 15:1-8

VISIT & APPEAL for NETWORK for a BETTER WORLD



Next weekend we welcome Barbara Charles from Network for a Better World (N4BW), a lay missionary group which works for the relief of poverty with specific support for woman & children in a rural parish in Southern Malawi. Network for a Better World was established in 2012 by a small group of returned lay missionaries, who wished to continue to support some of the most marginalised people in our world today. They are based in the UK and work in a remote area of rural Malawi in partnership with the Montfort Fathers & the local people. Barbara Charles will speak at the end of Mass about the work of the organisation and how we can be involved in building up the Church communities in the developing world and will also make an appeal.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY

Last Sunday Collection £227.47

PARISH FINANCE COMMITTEE

This Mon 22nd April 10.30am meeting of the Parish Finance Committee in the Community Room

CRAFT CLUB

Wed 1st May 12.15-2.30pm Craft Club meeting, then in a fortnight Wed 15th May

SUPPORT THE 22 WEEK LOWER LIMIT TO ABORTION

Ask your MP to support the abortion time limit reduction amendment and oppose abortion up to birth. Join our Catholic Bishops in supporting an amendment to reduce our abortion time limit from 24 weeks to 22 weeks. Collect a postcard today from the church entrances & post it to your MP in support of the 22-week amendment

VACANCY for DIOCESAN DIRECTOR of SCHOOLS.

The Diocese is seeking to recruit a Director of Schools and applications are now open. Details of the role and the application process can be found at <https://www.tes.com/jobs/vacancy/director-of-schools-birkenhead-2040730>

TRUSTEE VACANCY WITH MARRIAGE CARE

Marriage Care is a Catholic organisation providing marriage preparation & relationship counselling services across England, Wales & Gibraltar. We are looking for Trustees to strengthen our board and to help us continue to provide vital relationship support services to the Catholic community & beyond. Please visit: www.marriagecare.org.uk for more information or email: volunteer@marriagecare.org.uk

GET IN TOUCH QUICKLY –IF YOU ARE SICK If you or your relative enters Macclesfield Hospital let Fr. Peter know as soon as possible tel: 01625 423576 or by e-mail st.edmacc@gmail.com

DIARY of EVENTS

-Thurs 2nd May 7am-10pm Community Room in use for election of Police & Crime Commissioner

-Mon 6th May Public Holiday

-Thurs 9th May The Ascension of Our Lord- a Holyday of Obligation

-Tues 14th May Parish Pastoral Council Meeting

New Church Statistics reveal more Catholics, but fewer Vocations



On about Good Shepherd Sunday and the World day of Prayer for Vocations, the Vatican has released the 2024 Pontifical Yearbook and the 2022 Statistical Yearbook of the Church, two documents that present an essential view of the life of the Church, as well as statistical data to assess trends in the Church worldwide. The first contains information drawn between December 1, 2022, and December 31, 2023, while the latter examines basic aspects of the Church between 2021 and 2022.

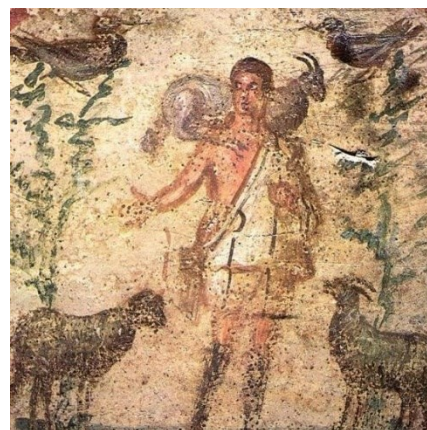
In total, the worldwide portion of baptized Catholics was shown to have increased by about **1%** in 2022, from 1.376 billion to **1.390 billion**. When broken down by continent, Africa showed the largest growth at 3% (265 to 273 million), followed by the Americas and Asia (+0.9% and +0.6%, respectively). Europe and Oceania were considered to be “stable,” meaning

these areas did not experience significant change.

Priests

[The Vatican News report](#) shows a continuance of the downward trends in number of priests. Since 2012, the Church has seen [a downward trend](#) in incoming vocations, and 2022 was no different. Compared to 2021, the clergy’s ranks decreased by 142 priests, going from 407,872 to 407,730. While this change is not enormous, it is troubling to see a net loss of priests after accounting for the newly ordained and those who have retired from active ministry.

The downward trend of priestly numbers is not, however, universal. Africa and Asia both saw growth of 3.2% and 1.6%, respectively, and the Americas were seen as relatively stable. Europe, which the report notes has the largest number of priests in the world, fell by 1.7%, followed by Oceania with a drop of 1.5%. It is unlikely that this downward trend in priests will turn next year, as the number of seminarians has continued to fall since 2012. There are currently 108,481 seminarians studying to become priests worldwide, with a variation of -1.3% compared to the situation a year earlier. Africa was the only continent to show growth in this area (by 2.1%) with 34,541 men. It was followed by Asia with 31,767, the Americas with 27,738, Europe with 14,461, and Oceania with 974 major seminarians



**JESUS THE GOOD SHEPHERD, 3RD/ 4TH C
CATACOMB OF PRISCILLA ROME**

Deacons

Meanwhile, the permanent diaconate continues to increase in popularity, growing from 49,176 to 50,150 (2%) worldwide, in 2022. Every continent exhibited growth in the number of permanent deacons, with the Americas and Europe in the lead at 2.1% and 1.7%, respectively.

Bishops and religious

From 2021-2022 the number of bishops worldwide rose from 5,340 to 5,353. The lion’s share of bishops were named to Africa and Asia, growing the number of bishops on those continents by 2.1% and 1.4%, respectively.

Religious

The number of non-priest professed religious men was also shown to be on the decline. The year 2022 saw their ranks drop from 49,774 to 49,414. This was, however, not a universal drop, with Europe, Africa, and Oceania citing decreases in numbers, **while Asia and to a lesser extent the Americas experience growth.**

While it was found that female religious outnumber Catholic priests by 47%, their numbers are also in sharp decline, falling from 608,958 to 599,228, or 1.6%. Africa saw the largest increase of professed women (1.7%), but the only other continent to show a positive figure was Southeast Asia at .1%. South and Central America, which were taken together, saw a decrease of 2.5%, but the largest declines in professed women were seen in Oceania (-3.6%), Europe (-3.5%), and North America (-3.0%).



Encountering Christ

The Wednesday Prayer Custom for Homes, Schools & Parishes

Prayerfully preparing for Sunday Mass with special prayers for our school families



Set aside 10-15 minutes and create a suitable environment by removing any distractions. Make sure that you are comfortable. Perhaps light a candle. Make the sign of the cross and remain still for a minute of settling silence.



Remember that through this scripture our Lord is truly present. Read the Gospel, aloud and slowly, and pay attention to any words that stand out. If any do, meditate on them for a few minutes and be invited into a dialogue with God.

1

Read

The Gospel for Sunday 21st April 2024

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd is one who lays down his life for his sheep. The hired man, since he is not the shepherd and the sheep do not belong to him, abandons the sheep and runs away as soon as he sees a wolf coming, and then the wolf attacks and scatters the sheep; this is because he is only a hired man and has no concern for the sheep. I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for my sheep. And there are other sheep I have that are not of this fold, and these I have to lead as well. They too will listen to my voice, and there will be only one flock and one shepherd. The Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me; I lay it down of my own free will, and as it is in my power to lay it down, so it is in my power to take it up again; and this is the command I have been given by my Father."

Taken from John 10:11-18 The Fourth Sunday of Easter, Year B

2

Reflect

After reading the Gospel, did any words stand out? If they did, ponder or discuss them before proceeding with the reflection.

Each year on this 4th Sunday of Easter there is a reading from John about the Good Shepherd. To think of ourselves as woolly and cuddly sheep, obedient to the shepherd, would be a mistake. Sheep are renowned as being silly, contradictory creatures, always starting off in the wrong direction, getting themselves into tangles and difficulties. In the Holy Land they are scraggy beasts, pastured on rocky and often dangerous ground, amid boulders and cliffs, threatened by wild animals and marauders. It was not simply a matter of the shepherd sitting on a rock and idly playing his pipe. He needed to be on the alert to save the sheep from hurting themselves. So Jesus as the good shepherd is kept well occupied by our foibles, our stubbornness, our mistakes and our fears. Again, as in this Sunday's other two readings, there is the reassurance of a close relationship with the Father. Jesus knows us intimately, just as he knows the Father. It is questionable whether in real life a shepherd should lay down his life for his sheep. What would happen to the remainder of the flock? But it is an expression of Jesus' whole-hearted devotion to the flock that he shepherds. **What is a shepherd's job with the sheep? How can Jesus act as your shepherd? Who do you think of as shepherds in your life? What do you value most in those who guide you?**

Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB

3

Respond & Request

Now slowly and prayerfully read the Gospel once again but this time in silence. Consider how this Gospel could apply to your life in general. Thank God for any insight you may have received.

Then ask God to bless you with a spiritual gift to help you act on any resolution you have made. Perhaps: love, hope, understanding, wisdom, faithfulness, peace, self control, patience, joy, forgiveness, hope or something else.

4

Pray for Families

This Wednesday's word for our school families is TRUST!

After praying for your loved ones, please remember to pray for our present and future Church, particularly for the families connected to our schools. You may want to conclude this special weekly time with a simple prayer such as:

St Joseph, Patron Saint of Families and Protector of the Church, pray for us. Mary, Star of Evangelisation, pray for us. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

WEDNESDAY WORD PLUS †

Fr Henry's reflections on the first and second readings of **Sunday 21st April 2024**



1st Reading: Acts of the Apostles 4:8-12

Carrying on the Life of Jesus

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter said, "Rulers of the people, and elders! If you are questioning us today about an act of kindness to a cripple, and asking us how he was healed, then I am glad to tell you all, and would indeed be glad to tell the whole people of Israel, that it was by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, the one you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by this name and by no other that this man is able to stand up perfectly healthy, here in your presence today. This is the stone rejected by you the builders, but which has proved to be the keystone. For of all the names in the world given to men, this is the only one by which we can be saved."



The Acts of the Apostles shows that the Church carries on the life of Jesus. Under the leadership and power of the Spirit the Church represents the Risen Christ in the world of the first century and of today. So Peter and Paul work the same sorts of miracles as Jesus did, as signs and works of power. They heal people, raise the dead, forgive sins and spread the Good News of the sovereignty of God, just as Jesus did. In less spectacular ways the life of the Church community still continues the work of Jesus. Peter explains that all this is done 'in the name of Jesus'. The name signifies the power of a person. So we are baptised in, or even into, the name of Jesus, and in this way take on his personality and his power in the Spirit. We become the company of Jesus. It is in his name or power that we hope. In the early years of the Church, Christians were known as those over whom the name of Jesus had been pronounced, that is, those who have entered under Jesus' patronage and who trust in his name.

What does it mean to be a part of "the company of Jesus"?



2nd Reading: 1 John 3:1-2

Sharing the Heritage of Jesus

Think of the love that the Father has lavished on us, by letting us be called God's children; and that is what we are. Because the world refused to acknowledge him, therefore it does not acknowledge us. My dear people, we are already the children of God but what we are to be in the future has not yet been revealed; all we know is, that when it is revealed we shall be like him because we shall see him as he really is.



From beginning to end this first letter of John is a meditation on Christian love and its implications. The innermost motivation of all Christian activity is the awareness that we have been raised to the sonship of God and to be co-heirs of God with Jesus. This is a new sort of 'sonship', for both women and men have been raised to it, whereas in the world of the apostles only sons (not daughters) could inherit. This 'sonship' enables us to call God 'Father'. When Paul speaks of this, he uses the Aramaic word 'Abba' as a sort of talisman and guarantee that we can pray 'Father', using the same address as Jesus himself used. 'Abba' is not a children's word like 'Daddy', as has sometimes been supposed, but is the expression of a warm and responsible adult relationship. Just as Jesus' sonship to the Father consisted in doing perfectly the Father's will and being about the Father's business in his whole life, so the Christian, spurred on by this relationship, is drawn to a heartfelt obedience to God. This must be a challenge for us.

Do we always act as children of the Father, being truly his representatives in the world, striving to bring his will to completion in all that we do?

“...striving to bring his will to completion in all that we do.”

The Wednesday Word Encountering Christ: Connecting Home, School & Parish through the Word of God

**The Wednesday Word is under the patronage of St Joseph, Patron Saint of Families and Protector of the Church
Within the tradition of the Catholic Church, each Wednesday is dedicated to St Joseph**