



parish newsletter

Sixth Sunday of Easter (Year B) | 9 May 2021

Reflecting on the Gospel



into preserving, deepening and sustaining them. Love and friendship share a mutual relationship with each other that deserves more reflection.

Where does love come from? We can consider relationships that have not succeeded and conclude that they were somehow due to our “failures in love.” In doing so, we assume that human beings are the ones responsible for love, its success and also its failure. While our weakness, emotional composition and sinfulness can easily impact our ability to love, its origin is not human. God is love. God is love’s author and origin. When we love, it is God who loves in and through us. It is because of this divine closeness that Jesus is able to call us friends! It is not because of anything we have done but simply because of who we are. Realising and contemplating this awesome reality becomes a game changer across the board. It gives us reason to clear the table of anything that can adversely affect the way we love so that we can open the door for its author to shine forth.

Francis of Assisi to leave that which is comfortable and worldly and live a radical life. They relate with the love of God that radiates in and through all living things and appreciate their sacredness. It was having an intimate experience of God’s love and friendship that propelled St. Francis and others to embrace simplicity, act nonviolently, pursue humility, love enemies, care for the earth and open up avenues for true justice. Understanding this profound truth will also help us find peaceful solutions to world’s problems, restore relationships with our sisters and brothers, bring the grace of loving stewardship to creation and heal many wounds. Once we begin to see how wonderfully holy all of life really is, we discover joy. We lose our need for fear, develop a fierce fortitude, act prudently and seek justice. There is great power in love because it comes from God. It will never fail. It also enjoys the company of two other friends who are eager to become our friends as well: faith and hope. These are just as important to have and to share.

Coming upon this truth is what leads folks like St.

“Remain in my love,” and, “I call you friends,” are powerful words that are found in John’s Gospel. Most of us probably have them committed to memory or have at least heard them proclaimed

dozens of times. They are words that can easily become trite and quickly glossed over without fully pondering and digesting their profound beauty. When we take the time to immerse ourselves in

them, they can radically change our lives and our relationships. They can open up new doors of adventure and hold countless possibilities for meaning. The essence of love and friendship are things

that can easily be taken for granted. They have always been there and are a significant part of our lives. Many would say that they could not live without love and friendship, and they put a great deal of care

Everyday Stewardship



movie magic over the whole situation and Boy and Girl find what Hallmark tells us is true love.

I could make a list of all the things that are inaccurate about these movies, and something I would put right near the top — maybe even above the sometimes-unbelievable storylines — is the idea that love is a feeling.

See, I’m not sure if it’s accurate to call these movies love stories. Attraction stories, sure. But if you’ve ever forgiven someone who’s hurt you, nursed a dying parent, gotten up for an infant’s night feeding or let your kid have the last piece of cake, you know that real love is a verb. It’s something you do. And it is almost always a choice.

Love one another. How often do we hear this? How often do we think about what it really means? How often do we take a moment to consider the action Jesus is asking us to take and the choice he is asking us to make?

Tracey Earl Welliver, MTS

Love one another. The greatest commandment, the simplest commandment — and if you’ve ever loved anyone, you know it’s also the hardest.

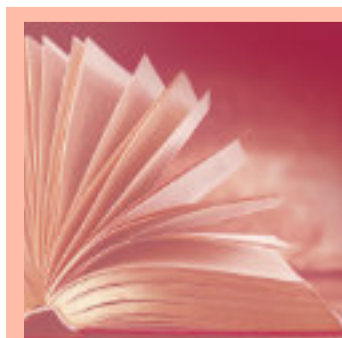
I’m man enough to admit it. I’ve seen one or two of those cheesy Hallmark movies that are especially popular around the holidays. Boy meets Girl. Boy and Girl encounter a catastrophic roadblock to their relationship — they’re coaches of rival high school volleyball teams, or he runs a dog kennel and she works at a feline rescue, so it could never, ever work out, right? But sprinkle a little



Live the Liturgy

God is love. These three simple words deserve a great deal of attention. They have the power to transform our relationship with God from something that is static and distant to one that is personal and real. We all know the power of love and how important it is to completing all of the human and divine circuits of our lives. But we do not often consider the awesome fact that it is given to us as a gift and is not simply part and parcel of the human package. God is the author of love and love itself. When we truly love another human being, it is really God being God in and through us. The love to which we are called and the love of which the Gospel speaks is a selfless love that seeks the well being of not only our significant others but of all of our brothers and sisters. This love, which is of God, is a love that will endure all things and bring immeasurable joy when experienced. It is the most sincere form of friendship.

Remain in my love!



First Reading

“In truth, I see that God shows no partiality. Rather, in every nation whoever fears him and acts uprightly is acceptable to him.” (Acts 10:34-35)

Psalm

The Lord has shown his salvation to the nations. (Ps 21)

Second Reading

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God; everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God. (1 Jn 4:7)

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia!
Jesus said: ‘If anyone loves me he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we shall come to him.’
Alleluia!

Gospel

“This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” (Jn 15:12-13)

Masses this Week

9	SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER	Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48/Ps 98:1, 2-3, 3-4 [cf. 2b]/1 Jn 4:7-10/Jn 15:9-17 10.30 Mass St Mary's People of the Parish 17.00 Mass St Mary's Holy Souls
10	Monday	Acts 16:11-15/Ps 149:1b-2, 3-4, 5-6a and 9b [cf. 4a]/Jn 15:26—16:4a 12.05 Mass St Mary's Intentions of Rita Hassett
11	Tuesday	Acts 16:22-34/Ps 138:1-2ab, 2cde-3, 7c-8 [7c]/Jn 16:5-11 12.05 Mass St Mary's Mary Rose Spours (RIP)
12	Wednesday Ss. Nereus & Achilleus; St. Pancras	Acts 17:15, 22—18:1/Ps 148:1-2, 11-12, 13, 14/Jn 16:12-15 12.05 Mass St Mary's Michael Warren (RIP) 19:00 Vigil Mass St Cecilia's Tom Simmons (RIP) & Fam.
13	THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD	Acts 1:1-11/Ps 47:2-3, 6-7, 8-9 [6]/Eph 1:17-23 or Eph 4:1-13 or 4:1-7, 11-13/Mk 16:15-20 12.05 Mass St Mary's Mary Metcalfe (RIP)
14	St Matthias	Acts 1:15-17, 20-26/Ps 113:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8 [8]/Jn 15:9-17 12.05 Mass St Mary's Ints of Veronica & Joe Jacob & Family.
15	Saturday	Acts 18:23-28/Ps 47:2-3, 8-10, 10 [8a]/Jn 16:23b-28 11.00 Mass St Mary's In Thanksgiving 18:00 Vigil Mass St Cecilia's Dec'd of Carpenter & Craig Fam..
16	SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER	Acts 1:15-17, 20a, 20c-26/Ps 103:1-2, 11-12, 19-20 [19a]/1 Jn 4:11-16/Jn 17:11b-19 10.30 Mass St Mary's Bogunol Hazubski (RIP) 17.00 Mass St Mary's People of the Parish



Christopher, Paula, Liz, Peter, Emilia, Jean, Teresa and Cath, the sick sisters at Oaklea.



Those who have died from COVID-19

If you would like a name added to our prayer list, please email or call the parish office.



Questions for the Week

First Reading: In the home of the Gentile-believer, Cornelius, Peter revealed one of the most significant insights from the early Church: "In truth, I see that God shows no partiality." Where do you see this message of unity needed today?

Second Reading: John saw love at the very core of God's divine identity. In fact, for John, "God is love." For this reason, believers are called to love one another. How do you keep this virtue paramount in your life?

Gospel: During his farewell discourse, Jesus refers to his disciples as his "friends." How often do you think of Jesus as your "friend?"



News & Announcements

40 Hours' Devotion

Eucharistic devotion for an extended period has a long tradition in the Catholic Church. In the past it was not uncommon for parishes to expose and pray before the Blessed Sacrament for 40 hours.

40 is a highly symbolic period for us: it is the number of years the Israelites spent wandering in the desert and the number of days Jesus spent fasting in the desert.

We've decided to hold 40 continuous hours of devotion to the Blessed Sacrament in this parish on 1, 2 and 3 July.

Why? Because as we come out of lock down and as the restrictions begin to relax we need to refocus our lives and our parish on Jesus present in the Eucharist. Because during the pandemic and the lock downs we have suffered so much and lost so much, especially our loved ones; we've been unable to grieve as we would like; we've been unable to mark special occasions as we would like. Because as we face what lies ahead for our parish and our families we need to re-root ourselves in Christ. Because it is right and just to lift up our hearts and minds to Christ thanking him for bringing us through the pandemic. Because as we begin to move out of the pandemic, our brothers and sisters throughout the world are still suffering its effects and they need our prayers.

40 hours, isn't that a long time? Yes, but think of what Jesus will do if we give him that much time!

What's involved? Lots of things! We haven't finalised the timetable yet, but there will be three Masses and we hope to be able to end with a Eucharistic procession. At various points during the 40 hours there will be periods of guided prayer as well as periods of silent prayer. There will be night vigils as well as involvement from the schools. The deanery is also going to get involved as well.

What can I do? Lots of things! The most important is that we'll need to have a rota to make sure the Blessed Sacrament is never left alone during the 40 hours. In a while we'll be looking for parishioners to commit to spend time praying before Jesus. That includes the nights as well. We'll also need help with the candles,

flowers and stewarding. Hopefully we can get some help from the deanery parishes as well.

What do I need to know? Loads of things! However, that's enough for now. You'll be hearing lots about this in the coming weeks. In the meantime, please pray for the success of the devotion and perhaps put it under the patronage of St Joseph and Mary, our Mother of Mercy.

Welcome and the Next Steps

If you're visiting us today you are especially welcome. If you've been away from the practice of your Catholic faith for a while, welcome home! We missed you!

You might also be joining us from another Christian denomination, faith background, or none at all—we hope you feel welcome too.

If you would like to learn more about the Catholic faith or are interested in becoming Catholic please speak to one of the priests or to Deacon Eddy. We'll be starting a course in September, but before then we'd love to help you get to know us a little better and perhaps answer any questions you might have. Jesus is calling you home to his Catholic Church!

Diocesan Celebration of Marriage

This year's celebration will take place at 12pm on Saturday, 22 May at the Cathedral. It will be an open Mass and a live streamed event.

The invitation will focus on couples celebrating significant anniversaries in 2021 but is open to engaged couples preparing for marriage, those who were married in the months prior to lockdown and since our last Mass in 2019 and all married couples. We include too those widowed and bereaved who were unable to visit wives and husbands in hospital and homes prior to their deaths. In these unprecedented times we remember couples in crisis and individual adults and children experiencing difficulties and abuse in their family relationships. We wish all to know that none is forgotten and that the Sacramental life, despite Covid, is very much alive and prayed for.

If you would like to book a place you can email the Cathedral at office@stmaryscathedral.org.uk. If you are celebrating a significant anniversary please give you details as special certificates are being issued.

command us to love: he isn't commanding us to feel, but to act with love towards others, regardless of how we might feel about them. Our feelings can be fickle, we all know that from experience. However, building up the kingdom of God in Sunderland is important and necessary work and Jesus knows that the work can't be left up to our mood swings!



Flock Notes

I don't have much space today because of the big and exciting announcement above! However, let me quickly say that Jesus reminds us in the gospel that love is more than a feeling, it is a choice we make to act in a particular way regardless of how we feel. That's why he can

Our Lady of Mercy Parish • 27 Bridge Street, Sunderland, SR1 1TQ • (0191) 567 5354 • sunderland.ourladyofmercy@rcdhn.org.uk www.sunderlandcatholic.com

St Mary's Church • 27 Bridge Street • Sunderland • SR1 1TQ • **St Cecilia's Church** • Ryhope Road • Sunderland • SR2 7TG

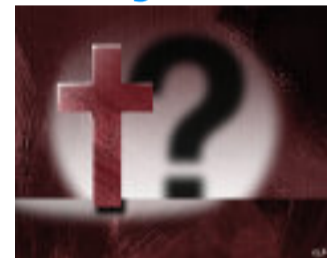
Fr Christopher Hancock MHM JCD, Parish Priest • christopher@sunderlandcatholic.com
Fr Emmanuel Nuh Mbeh MHM, Assistant Priest • emmanuel.mbeh@diocesehn.org.uk
Rev Eddy Barker, Parish Deacon
Canon Alexander Barrass, Priest in Residence



A parish of the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle
Reg Charity 1143450



Why do we do that?



Question: What is the difference between a "Saint" and a "Blessed"?

Answer: The process of proclaiming someone as a saint in the Catholic Church has evolved over the course of many centuries.

In the beginning, those honoured as saints were almost exclusively biblical figures or martyrs. However, after the legalisation of Christianity in the fourth century, new holy women and men came to be honoured as saints, and this was often done by popular acclaim or by the local bishop or abbot.

It was Pope Gregory IX (who was pope from 1227 to 1241) who officially proclaimed that only the pope had the authority to add someone to the official list (the "canon") of saints. This is the meaning of the word "canonisation."

Today, the saint-making process includes several steps, including detailed studies of the person's life and a recognition that they died as a martyr or lived a life of "heroic virtue." Once someone is recognised as a martyr or if a miracle is attributed to their intercession, they will be beatified and honoured as "Blessed." This means that they can be celebrated by Catholics in a particular country or region or by the members of certain religious community. If another miracle occurs and is approved, then the "Blessed" is canonised and honoured with the title "Saint," meaning that they are now officially recognised as a universal model of holiness and an intercessor.

