

St Michael and All Angels Catholic Church

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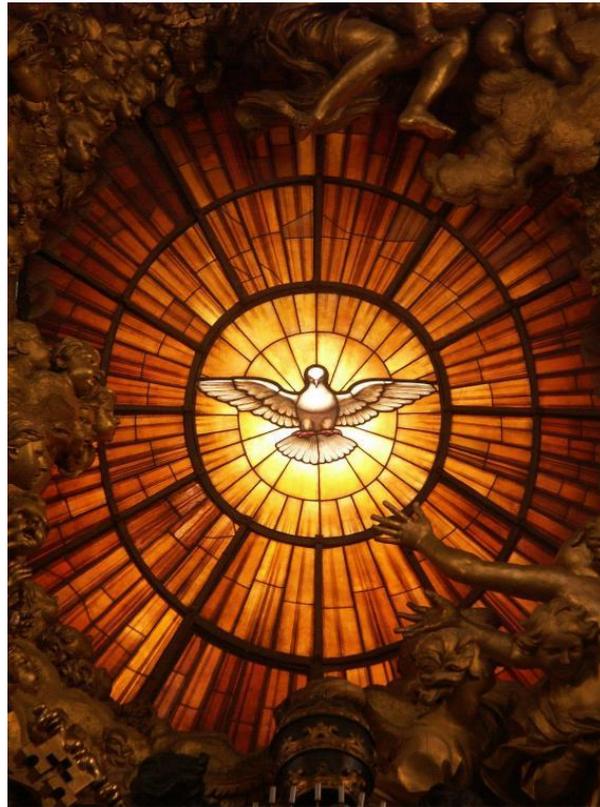
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Portsmouth Roman Catholic Diocesan Trust Registered Charity No 246871

Sixth Sunday of Easter, 17th May 2020, Jesus promises to send the Spirit.



In St Peter's Basilica, Rome is precious window of Bohemian glass, divided into twelve sections as a tribute to the Twelve Apostles; a brilliant dove stands out against it, the symbol of the Holy Spirit, the soul of the Church which the Spirit never ceases to help and to guide.

Please pray for repose of the soul of Bernard Hudson RIP who has died. We also pray for all those who are sick, for those ministering to them and for those who are seeking a vaccine for Covid19.

Gratitude...



... is happiness doubled by wonder.

Gilbert K. Chesterton

The Scripture Readings at Mass for the Sixth Sunday of Easter

We learn about the joy and enthusiasm with which the Samaritans received the Gospel. (Acts 8:5-8.14-17)

First reading Acts 8:5-8,14-17

Philip went to a Samaritan town and proclaimed the Christ to them. The people united in welcoming the message Philip preached, either because they had heard of the miracles he worked or because they saw them for themselves. There were, for example, unclean spirits that came shrieking out of many who were possessed, and several paralytics and cripples were cured. As a result there was great rejoicing in that town. When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, and they went down there, and prayed for the Samaritans to receive the Holy Spirit, for as yet he had not come down on any of them: they had only been baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

Psalm 65(66):1-7,16,20 *Cry out with joy to God, all the earth.*

Cry out with joy to God all the earth,

O sing to the glory of his name.

O render him glorious praise.

Say to God: 'How tremendous your deeds!

Cry out with joy to God, all the earth.

'Before you all the earth shall bow;
shall sing to you, sing to your name!'

Come and see the works of God,
tremendous his deeds among men.

Cry out with joy to God, all the earth.

He turned the sea into dry land,
they passed through the river dry-shod.

Let our joy then be in him;
he rules for ever by his might.

Cry out with joy to God, all the earth.

Come and hear, all who fear God.

I will tell what he did for my soul:

Blessed be God who did not reject my prayer
nor withhold his love from me.

Cry out with joy to God, all the earth.

Peter encourages Christians to remain steadfast under pressure in their attachment to Christ. (1 Peter 3:15-18)

Second Reading 1 Peter 3:15-18

Reverence the Lord Christ in your hearts, and always have your answer ready for people who ask you the reason for the hope that you all have. But give it with courtesy and respect and with a clear conscience, so that those who slander you when you are living a good life in Christ may be proved wrong in the accusations that they bring. And if it is the will of God that you should suffer, it is better to suffer for doing right than for doing wrong. Why, Christ himself, innocent though he was, had died once for sins, died for the guilty, to lead us to God. In the body he was put to death, in the spirit he was raised to life.

*To love Christ is to listen to his words and, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to put them into practice in our lives.
(John 14:15-21)*

Gospel John 14:15-21

Jesus said to his disciples: 'If you love me you will keep my commandments. I shall ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you for ever, that Spirit of truth whom the world can never receive since it neither sees nor knows him; but you know him, because he is with you, he is in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come back to you. In a short time the world will no longer see me; but you will see me, because I live and you will live. On that day you will understand that I am in my Father and you in me and I in you. Anybody who receives my commandments and keeps them will be one who loves me; and anybody who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I shall love him and show myself to him.'

Homily for the Sixth Sunday of Easter, 17th May 2020

At 8 pm sharp on Thursday evenings the Presbytery household stands at the gate armed with sanctuary handbells. We wave down Riders Lane towards Fr Jonathan and his wonderful family at St Francis Church ready to clap and to wave for the NHS staff and all of our keyworkers. We all let rip; our neighbours applaud from the balconies on the flats opposite, from Portsmouth Harbour ships' sirens sound, fireworks explode and passing cars blast their horns. The sweetest moments of all are when a car slows down right by us and the driver holds out proud from their lapel an NHS badge.

Of course, the deal has to be that if we applaud our keyworkers we have to do our bit too. For this shielded priest it's strange to pray in a locked church and leave it to others to do my shopping, collect my medication and post my letters. But I am reconciled to the notion that doing nothing outside my immediate patch is, just now, the sacrifice that I have to make. Doing nothing is doing my bit. The NHS doesn't want the extra burden of me.

Some brave NHS staff are our chaplains. Let me give a shout-out now for Fr Daniel Agber, of St Edmund's, Horndean, who is doing noble work at QA and Fr Joe McNerney, formerly of St Colman's and St Paul's in Cosham and Paulsgrove who has been a complete hero in the Southampton Hospitals. (Joe's a good buddy and I know how much he will hate me saying that ... but it's true!)

One the most wonderful things these guys do, together with all of the hospital staff, is to try to ensure that no-one dies without every spiritual and human comfort. That takes a lot of courage and commitment. We need to keep them all in our prayers as well as in our applause. Being there for someone else, especially at one of the most important moments of all, is exactly what Jesus is speaking to when He says: *I will not leave you orphans; I will come back to you.*

Have you ever, in the supermarket, or the park, or in the street, heard the piercing squeal of a toddler, who has run off so far and so fast and suddenly realised that that they cannot see mummy or daddy? Utterly alone, desolate and crying ... at least until mummy or daddy responds to the squeal, sweeps the little one up in their arms and everything is right again.

Jesus understands that human desolation when he says exactly what the disciples most need to hear: *I will not leave you orphans; I will come back to you.*

A good few of those disciples must have felt the same anguish as our squealing toddler. Adults have moments when they too are utterly alone, desolate and crying. You may have felt that yourselves; you may know others who do now. Perhaps there is somebody for whom you are praying because you know their life seems bleak and blighted.

The disciples knew the anguish of Good Friday. They felt the wonderment, and the questioning, of Easter Day. They know the joy of having their Risen Lord eat and drink, and walk and speak with them.

But the time is coming when they realise in their hearts, and in the pits of their stomachs, that He will no longer be with them. They feel that same alone-ness that our little squealing friend knows when mummy and daddy are nowhere to be seen.

His disciples have watched Jesus keenly all the while that they have known Him. They remember the wedding feast at Cana and how He helped newly-weds whose joy was in danger of being lost in an embarrassment of no more wine. They have seen His heart go out to those who are blind or lame, sick or possessed, and they have seen the love with which He heals them. They have seen His concern for the hungry ... and His insistence on feeding them. They have watched Him with people, such as the fishermen of Galilee, whose work is failing. He helps them find the miraculous draft of 153 fish. Jesus' disciples have seen Him with Jairus, who has lost his daughter to death. Jesus restores both the girl's life and his hope for Jairus. In three years, as they accompanied Him, Jesus' disciples have seen that His constant, natural, invariable response is love. It is what He does ... and it is what He is. As they rejoice in the Resurrection, as we do in Eastertide, they also come to realise that He is going to leave them. He will ascend to His Father; He will entrust to them the mission of the saving love that he has begun. How inadequate do they feel to the task? How unready do they feel to be alone? How ready are we? That is why Jesus says:

I will not leave you orphans; I will come

back to you.

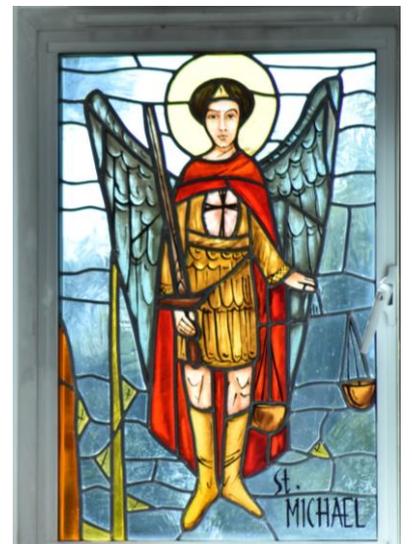
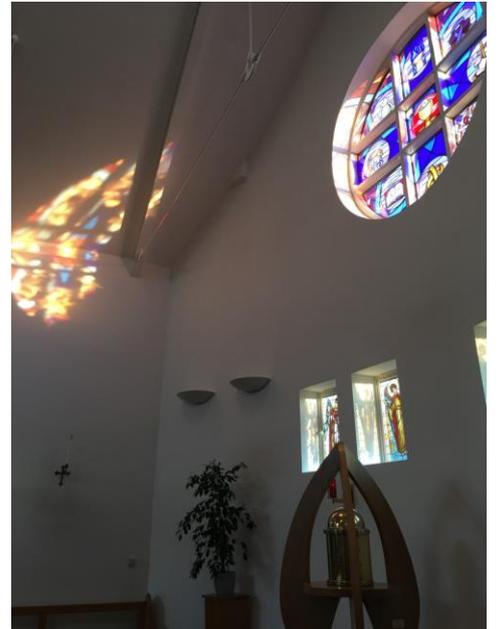
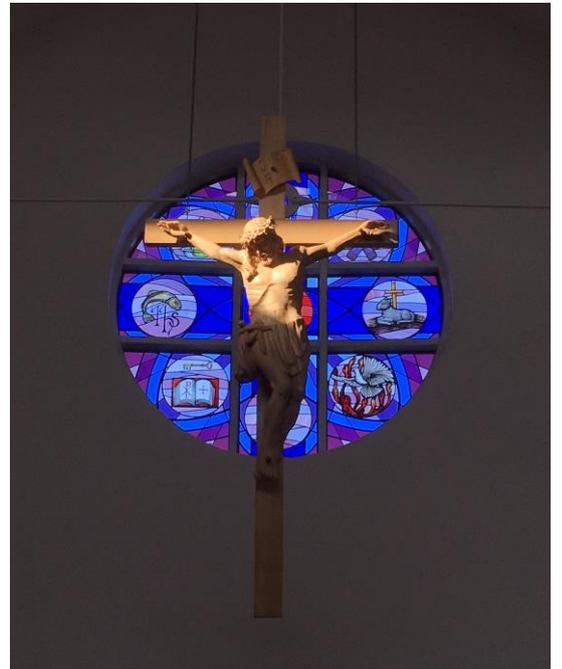
Next Thursday we celebrate the feast of the Ascension of the Lord. Jesus grants to His disciples the extraordinary dignity of taking on some of the work that He has started. And He promises them that they will not be alone. In a fortnight we celebrate the feast of Pentecost; the coming of God's Spirit into the world and into our lives.



If ever we feel utterly alone, desolate and crying, with that empty feeling in the pit of our stomachs and in our hearts, we need just to call on the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the love of God. It is as close to us as the flames that played on the heads of the apostles at Pentecost. The Spirit is closer to us than our breathing; we just need to draw in the breath of the Spirit. In St Michael's we have in the Paraclete Chapel, where I celebrate Mass every day, beautiful images of the Holy Spirit depicted in the stained glass window and the wondrous Paraclete Carving by Ian Etheridge. They remind us that we are never alone, that the Spirit of God's love is always with us, within us and for us. Heroic hospital chaplains, and keyworkers whom we applaud so gratefully, put into action the words that His Apostles heard Jesus say. Inspired by the Holy Spirit they ensure that no-one need ever feel orphans, alone, desolate. Thank God.

GDF 14th May 2020

You may recognise some local views from Canon Gerard's daily walks



..... which he hopes you will be able to come and admire again soon!

Saturday 16th May, of 5th Week of Easter

Betty Fellows RIP

17th May, Sixth Sunday of Easter

for the people of the Parish & our First Holy Communion families

18th May, Monday of the 6th Week of Easter

for Nell Jones

Tuesday 19th May, Dedication of St John's Cathedral

Yvonne Jolly RIP & Joseph & Lilian Lorage's 40th

20th May, Wednesday of 6th Week of Easter

Richard Mitchell RIP

Thursday 21st May, The Ascension of the Lord

James Keane RIP

22nd May, Friday of 6th Week of Easter after Ascension

Jackie & Tim Skull

23rd May, Saturday 6th Week of Easter after Ascension

Matt & Jo's intentions

24th May, Seventh Sunday of Easter

for the people of our Parish

Canon Gerard celebrates Mass daily and prays for you at the altar. He lights a candle and votive light for the intentions of all who would wish to light their own in our church. Please pray for the intentions for which he celebrates Mass.



The effects of coronavirus on developing countries where CAFOD works will be devastating. Families without enough to eat & without clean water & healthcare are particularly vulnerable. The poorest, most marginalised communities will be pushed further into poverty. Your prayers & gifts are needed now more than ever to help protect lives. Please donate at cafod.org.uk/coronavirusappeal

Collections Thank you to those who are helping our Parish Funds, as we have no collections now. You can donate by clicking below:

[Click here to Donate](#)



or by setting up a Standing Order. Request a form from the Parish Office and send it to your bank or set it up through online banking. Thank you. Our parish bank details:

PRCDTR Leigh St Michael

Lloyds Bank Sort code: 30 93 04

Account number: 00882004

If you wish to listen to Canon Gerard & Deacon Nick's homilies they are recorded on the Parish website:

www.stmichaelsleighpark.org.uk

Caritas Insight Food Project – St. John's Cathedral

Every Tuesday at the St John's Cathedral Discovery Centre, the Caritas InSight project delivers a free take-away hot meal as well as a bag of take-away sandwiches & cakes from the Cathedral Discovery Centre. To keep contact with those feeling isolated, the Caritas Insight Befriending Project was also established. Any food left over gets delivered to nearby hostels & the recently re-housed homeless people within the city. Nothing gets wasted; so far all food given has been gratefully received. However, we desperately need donations, vital for the project to continue supporting those in need, like the young mother we recently met who in addition to food was also given clothes and toiletries. If you are able to help, please drop off donations of non-perishable food, food containers, carrier bags, new food bags, clothing & toiletries on a Tuesday at the St John's Cathedral Car park between 11 am–12 noon. If anyone wants further information about this contact Fiona Allen on 07787355210 or email fallen@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk If you wish to donate items, but cannot get to the Cathedral they can be left with Maureen Graham, contact her on 02392 593 683.

Portsmouth Diocese Caritas worker Fiona Allen may be able to provide help with food for any local household currently having difficulties with sufficient provisions. If you, or anyone you know, is in need of such support at this challenging time please send details to: gerardflynn@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk or call 023 9248 4323. You will be assumed, with reference to GDPR, to be giving consent for your contact details to be passed on.

Lockdown listening

Recommendations this week come from Avril Broderick: Freddie Mercury's *Barcelona*,



Handel's *Messiah* and anything from Hans Zimmer

Alton Day of Renewal (ADoRE)

Although the usual meetings are suspended there will be a monthly ADoRE Online starting on 23rd May, including livestream Mass, praise and worship and an inspiring talk on Pentecost. For full details and how to participate go to www.altonrenewal.com/online.html



Mary: a Biblical Walk with the Blessed Mother

This new course begins on Wednesdays at 8 pm for 8 weeks. Join other parishioners in the comfort of your home with Zoom on laptop or smart phone. Kathy Collins, Julia Corps, Martin McGranaghan and Chris Bates invite you.

Martin will explain Zoom if you want to know more:

martinandjan@ntlworld.com 07900 836916

