

16th July 2023 (15th Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year A) PARISH NEWS

Dear All,

Mass arrangements – 15th & 16nd July

Saturday 15th July: 6.00pm at St. Michael's Church
Sunday 16th July: 9.00am at St. Michael's Church
Sunday 16th July: 11.00am at St. Oswald's Church

Mass Times – 25th July (Feast of Saint James the Apostle)

10.00am at St. Michael's Church

Imelda Lloyd RIP

We keep in our prayers the soul of Imelda Lloyd from Burghfield Common who died in June. Her Funeral Mass will be at Saint Oswald's Church on Tuesday 18th July at 11.30am.

Closer to Christ Campaign

Please note the following meetings open to all parishioners:

1. Thursday 20th July at 6.00pm – St. Michael's Church
2. Tuesday 25th July at 11.00am – St. Michael's Church (after 10.00am Mass mentioned above)

Sign-up sheets are available at both our Churches.

NOTE: A copy of this month's Campaign Newsletter is also attached to the email containing the Parish Newsletter.

Bishop's Sabbatical

From 5th September 2023 until late November 2023, Bishop Philip will be on Sabbatical in the United States, at the Catholic University of America in Washington. This will be followed by his annual spiritual retreat and a short break.

During this time the Diocese will be cared for by Canon David Hopgood, Vicar for Clergy, and by Father James McCauley, Moderator of our Curial Offices, assisted by others.

After ten years as our Bishop, it will be for him a time for prayer, reflection and spiritual renewal, alongside theological research. He hopes to return to the Diocese with greater energy to lead us to become a simpler, humbler and bolder Local Church, in accordance with the Ten-Year Mission Plan, *You Will be My Witnesses*. Pray that he will have a truly spiritual and refreshing time.

Sabbatical memories

Our last Bishop, Crispian, gave me a generous Sabbatical in Oxford after almost 20 years as a priest, which I found extremely beneficial. Since the invasion of the Ukraine by Russia, the opportunity to visit Finland during that Sabbatical has often been in my mind.

I stayed for a week at the Lutheran College in Turku, the cultural capital, with a visit to Helsinki and one of the outlying islands during winter. Memorable!

The Catholic, Lutheran and Orthodox Churches there have a very close relationship. The fine Lutheran Cathedral in Helsinki has been used for the consecration of the Catholic Bishop (our "Cathedral" being little more than a large parish church). Some parts of the country do not see a Catholic priest for long periods, and Turku was served by Polish priests. They were more than happy that I celebrated a Mass for the small group of English-speaking lecturers at the University, facilitated by a member of the Lutheran College Staff.

The presence of Russia on the borders of then neutral Finland, now a member of NATO following the Ukraine invasion, was an obvious concern. A motorway sign in Helsinki indicated that St. Petersburg was not far up the road! Also still remembered was the fact that in November 1939 the British Government did not come to the aid of invaded Finland as it should have by treaty obligations, because of the outbreak of World War Two. During the famous *Winter War*, the Finns held invading Soviet Russian forces at bay for 15 weeks, inflicting heavy casualties on them. A peace agreement resulted in 16,000 square miles of the country being surrendered to Russia. To its credit, our Government supported the independence of Finland in the mid 1940's, whereby it became a neutral country and not a Communist Satellite State. Now as a member of NATO, should it be invaded again, we should be obliged to defend it alongside the other members of the *North Atlantic Treaty Organisation* (NATO). It is said by some that the White Cliffs of Dover are no longer our border, which has now become Eastern Europe!

As the prayer after the Lord's Prayer at Mass pleads: Deliver us, Lord, we pray from every evil, graciously grant us peace in our days, that, by the help of your mercy, we may be always free from sin and safe from all distress, as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

The "Instrumentum Laboris"

Alongside the Ten-Year Mission Plan, we need to keep before our eyes the development of The Synodal Process, ideas from which will feed into the Plan. On 20th of June the *Instrumentum Laboris* (Working Document) for the October meeting in Rome was published. The document has a whole section devoted to Christian unity and about how the Catholic Church can learn from other Christian traditions. This formed the theme of an important Ecumenical Conference organised by Durham University recently, bringing together Catholic, Anglican, Quaker, Methodist, Baptist, United Reform and Pentecostal representatives. It has been described as "the most significant synodal-style meeting to have taken place in England and Wales since Pope Francis launched the synod process in 2021" (*The Tablet*, 8 July 2023). It is interesting to note that one of the non-Bishop participants of the October meeting will be Professor Ann Rowlands, a theologian at Durham. These participants will form 21% of those present, from six different continents, with both genders evenly represented.

On the eve of the two-day Durham sponsored symposium, Sister Nathalie Becquart, a senior official of the Synod Office in Rome, spoke of the possibility of a future synodal gathering bringing together leaders of the worldwide Christian Church. She has spoken of the forthcoming importance of the Ecumenical Prayer Vigil to be held in Saint Peter's Square, which will be led by Pope Francis and other Christian leaders. Working with other Christian traditions is a part of the Mission Plan for our diocese, as all of us recognise the challenges ahead to maintain a relevant Christian presence in the coming years. Especially so in *Churches Together Around Tadley*.

The *Instrumentum* speaks of the involvement of women at all levels of church decision making, the possible ordination of married men, greater acceptance of LGBTQ+ Catholics and reforms of Church governance.

It also raises the question of the training of future priests in the seminary system in synodal processes. Concern has been expressed that some recently ordained clergy are opposed to or unconcerned about a synodal process which calls all the Baptised to work together in prayerful discernment and respectful dialogue to seek God's will. The "promotion of the Baptismal dignity of women" will probably be a major topic in October, especially the argument about whether or not women can be ordained Deacons. The document states that these are questions for discernment, and the Synod is not a body authorised to make definite Church teaching of itself. It is interesting to note that Pope Francis did not accept the request that married men be ordained during the *Synod on the Amazon*. He felt the discussion had become polarised between those for and against, lacking an authentic Christian process of debate and discernment. As the *Instrumentum* points out, a Synod is more a liturgy than a parliament. Interesting times ahead!

CAFOD "Seeds for All" Campaign

There will be a talk on the "Seeds for All" Campaign after each Mass this weekend, after which parishioners will have the opportunity to sign a giant letter, which CAFOD will then pass on to the World Bank before their meeting in Morocco in October.

A brief overview: CAFOD is campaigning for farmers around the world to be able to continue to freely use and share their own seeds. New laws are being passed that are limiting what they are allowed to do with the seeds, giving them little choice but to buy more expensive seeds from large companies. These decisions are impacting farmers ability to produce enough food and will contribute further to the global cost of living crisis and have a negative impact on climate change.

Last minute item! - BACCA Summer Fete – TOMORROW Saturday 15th July

This year's Basingstoke Afro Caribbean Catholic Association Summer Fete will be taking place at St. Bede's School Field on Saturday 15th July 2023 from 12 noon until 6.00 pm. There will be a BBQ, bouncy castles, face painting, sack races and lots more. Tickets £10.00 for adults, £5.00 for children, family ticket £30.00, and children under 2 years go free.

Living *Laudato Si* network

This friendly network support group meet monthly on Zoom to chat and catch up on local and national news from parishes responding to the call to care for our common home.

If you have an interest in social or ecological action contact mthompson@cafod.co.uk for more information.

Grandparents Day – Sunday 23d July

'His Mercy is from age to age' (Luke1:50) is the banner the Holy Father is flying for World Youth Day and for Grandparents' Day this year which falls on Sunday 23rd July. God bless all our grandparents all over the world!

To enquire about the Grandparents' Rosary group please contact:

marriagefamilylife@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Diocesan Day for Catechists – Sunday 30th September

We are invited to join in a day for fellowship, formation and prayer for the Catechists of Portsmouth Diocese at the Winchester Catholic Pastoral Centre, for them to be encouraged and strengthened in faith, with the centrepiece of the day being a celebration Mass.

The day is free to attend. Please bring a packed lunch. Register via:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/diocesan-day-for-catechists-registration-598927286637>

Diocese job vacancies

Safeguarding & DBS Administrator – Closing Date: Friday 21 July 2023

IT Technician – Closing Date: Monday 31 July 2023

For these & other vacancies visit: <https://www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/about-us/other/jobs/>

Enjoy your weekend.

Father Patrick Tansey

Parish Priest

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Bringing people closer to Jesus Christ through his Church

Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth

A registered charity number 1199568

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