

# **Teams Newsletter**

**for the GB Regions.**

**January- March 2021**



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Front cover photo- Rydal Water in Winter. Mark Edwards

## Need more Newsletters?

For extra copies of this newsletter contact Mark and Dympna at [teams@mdedwards.co.uk](mailto:teams@mdedwards.co.uk) Contact your regional couple for any ongoing change in the number of newsletters you need or who within your team you wish to receive the newsletters.

Please send all photos & articles for the Jan-March 2021 edition to Mark & Dympna Edwards by **1st March** to: [teams@mdedwards.co.uk](mailto:teams@mdedwards.co.uk)

## Seen the latest teams Literature?

Copies of all teams leaflets are available from the Teams GB literature couple Alan & Gaynor Hakes.

# Regional Couple letter

Dear Friends,

*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.*

1John 3:2



*For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.*

1 Corinthians 13:12



Yesterday we spent some time in the company of some very good Teams friends. We enjoyed a glass of wine, caught up on news, shared joys and worries- and generally put the world to rights. It was a lovely evening, and all thanks to Zoom! We have been reflecting recently about some of the ways in which we are very fortunate.

- Talking across the garden with Sue's Step-Mum
- Walking and talking while socially distanced
- Catching up with family and friends on the phone
- Using the internet for family quizzes, time with friends, Mass, prayer and Teams meetings (including with couples from other continents!)





Some of this has made us realise we will be able to continue to have richer interactions with people who are far away, even when the world becomes easier. In addition, all this has illuminated that we have many good ways of maintaining our relationships and expressing our love at the moment, but our previous experience tells us this is nothing like as rich as spending time face to face, relaxing rather than bearing in mind how far apart we are... and actually hugging!



This helps us understand a little of what John and Paul were expressing in their letters: The world we know and love today is Christ-filled and good although *'for now we see only a reflection as in a mirror'* or Zoom meeting *'... then we shall see face to face. Now we know in part; then we shall know fully, even as we are fully known'*.

Let's appreciate and respond to the abundance of God's love we experience in nature and in each other, just as we appreciate and respond to seeing each other at a distance and via our screens. How much more will we understand how much we are loved and can love when we see each other face to face!

## SMILE

By Spike Milligan

Smiling is infectious  
You catch it like the flu.

When someone smiled at me today  
I started smiling too.

I passed around the corner  
and someone saw my grin.

When he smiled I realised  
I'd passed it on to him.

I thought about that smile  
then realised it's worth.

A single smile just like mine  
could travel around the Earth.

So if you feel a smile begin,  
don't leave it undetected.

Let's start an epidemic quick  
and get the world infected!

Sue and Paul Rowney  
Regional Couple, Northern Britain

**A big Thank You to  
Piotr & Dzidzia Chodko-  
Zajko our for 5 years of  
service as Responsible  
couple for the  
Transatlantic Superregion**

# Welcome to New Southern Regional Couple

We are looking forward to taking over the role of Southern Region Couple on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021. We feel honoured to have been asked to serve Teams of Our Lady and will do so to the best of our ability. We take this opportunity to thank Paul and Annette for their leadership and dedication over the past year or so, and also Bernard and Susan previously. We hope to build upon their legacies - they have certainly set a high bar.



We have been married for 36 years and have 3 children and 4 granddaughters who are, of course, a great joy to us. Luckily our daughter lives not too far away and in pre-covid times we saw them regularly and we can't wait for more normal times to return. We both took early retirement some years ago and since then have been active within our parish, undertaking various voluntary roles.

We draw on the personal relationships and support of our local Teams, particularly our own Team, Guildford 1, which has been in existence for more than 40 years. Unlike most couples who occupy leadership roles, we came to Teams late in life, joining an established team as a mature couple about 5 years ago. Truly Teams are for couples of all ages. We are sorry that we did not have the benefit of this support earlier in life. We are interested in the contribution that older couples can make within the movement and the church generally.

We are taking on this role in difficult times, and like everyone, we are getting used to the benefits and disadvantages of meeting via Zoom and other technologies. We recognise that the world has changed as a result of the pandemic and the "new normal", when it emerges, is unlikely to be the same as previously. We hope to be able to meet the challenges – there is much to learn and reflect on as we go forward.

*Peter & Yvonne Newman*  
*New Regional Couple, Southern Britain*

# Masks for charity

"There is no situation without a solution, no obstacle without opportunity!" Such was the thinking of a group of ladies in St Joseph's Parish, Epsom, after the onset of lockdown in March. Three of these ladies, Mary Makinson, Irene Herbonnet and Colette Totman are members of Teams of Our Lady in Epsom and Banstead. They, together with others, including Jenny Macqueen of Epsom 2 Team, had been making greetings cards for Charity for



some years, from the sale of which they were able to support the Missionary Sisters of the Divine Motherhood in their work in Zambia. The connection is Sister Anne Kelly, the natural sister of Theresa Park, of Epsom 1 Team, who is a member of the congregation, and herself in Zambia. With the advent of lockdown, their endeavours ground to an abrupt halt, as they were unable to meet and make the cards or to sell them in the Church. What to do? When the wearing of masks in public buildings became compulsory, they decided to turn their talents to something completely different - the making and selling of masks, which could be done individually.

To be effective, and saleable, masks need to fulfil the requirements of the World Health Organisation, and to be made of three layers of fabric of 100% cotton, the middle one of which must be a special filter sheet. A source for the supply of filter material was duly identified and decorative fabric for the outer layers became available from various sources, in many varied and attractive designs, including festive Christmas themes. The masks are made to two different specifications, one similar to the ubiquitous blue folded NHS masks and the other of the "pouch" type. They come in three sizes, small (for children), medium (for women) and large (for men). They are all washable and so reusable and are sold at £5 each. Some examples are displayed in the photograph. Many people have been so pleased with their masks that they have ordered more for their families and friends.

## Prayer for Putting on a Face Mask

Creator,  
as I prepare to go into the world,  
help me to see the sacrament  
in the wearing of this cloth –  
let it be "an outward sign  
of an inward grace" –  
a tangible and visible way  
of living love for my neighbours,  
as I love myself.

Christ,  
since my lips will be covered,  
uncover my heart,  
that people would see my smile  
in the crinkles around my eyes.  
Since my voice may be muffled,  
help me to speak clearly,  
not only with my words,  
but with my actions.

Holy Spirit,  
as the elastic touches my ears  
remind me to listen carefully –  
and full of care –  
to all those I meet.  
May this simple piece of cloth  
be shield and banner,  
and each breath that it holds,  
be filled with your love.  
In your Name  
and in that love,  
I pray.  
May it be so.  
May it be so.

Right Rev. Dr. Richard Bot

Sales were initially promoted through the Parish newsletter, but the fame of these ladies grew, and there have been articles about them on the front page of the local paper and in Catena, the magazine of the Catenian Association, which helped to boost sales to the point where they have now raised more than £5,000 for three charities, primarily for The Missionary Sisters of the Divine Motherhood, but also for a Parish in San Benito in Peru, a charity also supported by the Parish of Epsom, and the Manna Society, a charity for homeless people in London, supported by the Epsom Circle of the Catenian Association.

It is very likely that the need to wear face coverings will be with us for some time to come. These ladies would be only too pleased to fulfil the requirements of any members of END Teams for face masks, large or small! Contact [creativeladies.stjosephs@gmail.com](mailto:creativeladies.stjosephs@gmail.com)  
phone 01737 358317 or 07740 902068

Thank you,

Mary Makinson, Banstead  
Rene Herbonnet Epsom 2  
Colette Totman Epsom 1"

## Regional Gatherings

Sept/ October 2020

### *The Sacrament of Marriage, Graces & Mission*

September seems a long time ago now but we enjoyed getting together with Teams friends old and new to celebrate our regional gatherings. The format of the event, prayer, updates, thoughtful input, discussion and mixed teams meeting followed by mass went very well. It provides spiritual nourishment and insight and was a delight to catch up with Teams members.

Some bonuses of doing this online was that we didn't have to travel miles and also got to know couples from other parts of Britain within our mixed team meeting that we wouldn't otherwise have met. Cake and hugs were the main things we missed from meeting in person - the informal catch up in the coffee breaks that from previous Teams events and we look forward to when we can do this in 2021.

Dympna & Mark Edwards, Editors.



# Mixed Teams Meetings -ZOOM

Many people at the recent GB Regional Gatherings expressed the joy they experienced in being able to participate in the workshop and Mixed Team sessions of the Gatherings. Some people especially appreciated this as they are feeling isolated from their Teams and the Teams Movement, as their Teams have not been meeting regularly via the internet.

Reflecting on this feedback, the GB Province Team decided to begin running Monthly Mixed Team Meetings via Zoom. The Mixed Team Meetings were offered to all Teams Members in Britain and Ireland. They thought that they might especially appeal to those couples, widows, widowers and spiritual advisors whose Team were not meeting, who may not have a team currently, and people who would like to try out Teams experience or mixed teams without commitment.

The first of these Monthly Mixed Team Meetings was held on Friday, 20 November. Thirty one couples/ spiritual counsellors took part with Feedback was very positive.

***"We would like to say how much we enjoyed our mixed Teams meeting today. It was such a joy putting faces to names and sharing with five lovely couples. We feel so socially and spiritually uplifted."***

***"That was wonderful!!! The buzz beforehand and the friendship during the mixed team was just lovely. As donkey says to Shrek when they reach Duloc 'let's do that again'!! "***

***"It was great to see and hear everyone tonight. We enjoyed the meeting"***

***"Thank you so much for organising the mixed Teams event last night. I think you can confidently call it a resounding success."***

***"It was good to have a time at the beginning to see one another informally and chat. The small mixed Team worked very well and gave us a good opportunity to begin to get to know one another and to share on matters that are important to us and our families."***

Many thanks to Piotr and Dzia Chodzko-Zajko and the regional couples for organising the Zoom meeting.

The next Mixed Teams meeting will take place on **Wed 16 December 7.30 p.m.** If you'd like to participate please email your regional couple who will send joining details. You don't need to join the Mixed Team Meetings every month; you can take part any month when you'd like to participate.

Dympna & Mark Edwards, Editors.



# Remembering Mgr Ray Charlton

Monsignor Ray Charlton 1925-2020

An Appreciation from the members of Stokesley Team, Teesside and North Yorkshire

Monsignor Ray Charlton, our well-known and highly respected spiritual counsellor, sadly passed away in August 2020 aged 95 years at James Cook University Hospital in Middlesbrough.

After serving in the Navy in WW2, Ray trained in seminary in Ireland and worked his whole career in the Middlesbrough diocese, giving long and dedicated service both as parish priest and as diocesan financial secretary for many years. A number of us knew him first as our priest, deeply knowledgeable and involved in our local community (he's shown opposite at Fran and Alan's two children's baptism). We only knew him in old age, but he showed a true appreciation of the realities of family life.



Fran and Alan valued his weekly visits to Fran's mother in her last illness, and have fond memories of his playing Cluedo with their family. Gail and Joe, when new to the parish, were offered practical help with childcare at the birth of their second child, and enjoyed his wry observations on parenthood.

After supporting us as parishioners through the thick and thin of life, he retired, and soon after joined our new Team as spiritual counsellor. In ten years, very little apart from illness and the COVID lockdown kept him away from Teams meetings; when he could no longer live independently and moved to Nunthorpe Hall residential home, we met in its rather grand library (pictured below) kindly hosted by its caring staff. He shared his highs and lows in the same way as us, whilst sprinkling in anecdotes about life's joys and challenges, many of them hilarious. He took the reading and reflection on scripture within Teams seriously, offering us interpretations and understandings.



As recently as last year he took the time to read carefully the Teams guidance on the role of the spiritual counsellor, advising us on this and take a fresh approach to it himself. He's missed by many, but special to us in our Team. God bless you Monsignor Ray, may you rest in peace.

*Joe and Gail Reilly, Helen and Peter Kemp, Fran and Alan Burns (Stokesley)*

# From Ireland with love

No doubt, you will have read the article on the Marriage masterclass in the Superregional Newsletter (page 13-14) and having received information from your regional couple signed up to the December event. If you have, brilliant, please let us have any reflections that we can put in the next newsletter.



If for any reason this has passed you by and you have missed the August and December events, don't despair. As editors we have asked Ingrid and Padraig who started it all to explain a little.

## **What is it all about?**

*It aims to promote the spirituality of Teams, sharing the beauty and richness that this movement brings to the lives of many people throughout the world.*

## **How did it start?**

It started with expansion with the aim of "enabling Teams to continue the wonderful mission of bearing witness to Christian marriage in Ireland and in the world".

## **How does the event work?**

Couples and Teams spiritual counsellors from 10 countries share their experience of Teams in short videos that you can access via a closed facebook page over a set time period. Regional couples circulate the sign up detail. It is Free and private. To find the group [search Facebook](#) for "**Marriage Masterclass with Teams of Our Lady**"

## **When did it take place?**

There have been two events in August and December 2020 but more are planned for 2021.

## **What happened?**

*"The events were well attended with people from over 20 countries taking part, from all corners of the world, representing the wonderful diversity of Teams. Many of the participants also were non Teams members".*

*"It built bridges and brought together people of faith across six continents, while sharing a pool of experiences about how Teams enriched the lives of many and strengthen their vocations to married life and priesthood".*

*"These video-testimonies highlighted what an enormous gift it represents not only for families, but also for young people trying to live their faith, for priests, bishops and for the whole Catholic Church."*

### **What did people say?**

*"Lovely inspirational sharing from Teams of Our Lady couples and chaplains. Well done to all the contributors and to you for this wonderful initiative."*

*"Brilliant and beautiful"*

*"Thank you, it was great to have been part of this 'diamond mine'!"*

### **Oh no, we missed it what can we do?**

*"The international group on Facebook formed during the Masterclass will continue its existence after the 8th of December, so you're more than welcome to join us anytime for inspiring testimonies about life in Teams and much more! Also, follow us on Facebook: Like our FB page Equipes Notre Dame – Teams of Our Lady Ireland, featuring daily posts on spirituality and married life. Or follow our Twitter account: @TeamsLady."*

Mark & Dympna Edwards, Editors

# Marriage Masterclass

with Teams of Our Lady

1-8 December 2020

For married couples, dating couples and all discerning their vocation.

10 countries. 40+ videos.



Click here and then JOIN the private Facebook group called Marriage Masterclass with Teams of Our Lady.

# Spiritual Confession

## “SPIRITUAL CONFESSION” HAND-IN-HAND WITH SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

We have quite likely all been introduced to the Prayer of St. Alphonsus for a Spiritual Communion as a recourse in circumstances, all too accustomed now, when we are constrained from access to the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist. Less familiar but no less concerning may be our redress for loss of access to absolution in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Many since childhood have learned and sought to practice regular Penance so as to be well prepared for Holy Communion. Our need in the present situation to have forgiveness and be well prepared to meet the Lord is by no means diminished, regardless that our communion may be spiritual, rather than real and sacramental.

We stumbled across some exceedingly helpful guidance on the website of the Archdiocese of Cape Town, South Africa (<https://adct.org.za>). We found there two documents that each outline a liturgy that can be celebrated in the home:

- A service for Spiritual Communion (<https://adct.org.za/a-spiritual-communion-service-in-the-home>)
- To go hand in hand with it, or perhaps better in preparation, a service of “Spiritual Confession” (<https://adct.org.za/confession-in-a-time-of-coronavirus>).

In his diocesan letter recommending the latter document, Bishop Sylvester David OMI writes:

*How then does a Catholic cope with the need for the sacraments which cannot be provided at this time? With respect to the Eucharist, the Holy Father recently spoke of the meaningfulness of spiritual communion under the circumstances in which we find ourselves. We have put out prayers in this regard.*

*With respect to the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation the same holds. We are encouraged to make a “perfect act of contrition”, and firmly resolve to celebrate the Sacrament as soon as circumstances permit. A “perfect act of contrition” is a lively sorrow for one’s sins because of one’s love of God. An “imperfect act of contrition” on the other hand refers to wanting forgiveness because of the fear of punishment.*

*This is how the Church cares for the faithful in these unusual circumstances. We are encouraged to entrust ourselves to the love and mercy of God. The prayers for a “spiritual confession”, with the necessary act of contrition, is available below the examination of Conscience.*

The document also quotes Pope Francis on the topic: “People who cannot get to confession because of the coronavirus lockdown or another serious reason can go to God directly, be specific about their sins,



*request pardon and experience God's loving forgiveness."*

Just as Spiritual Communion is not a substitute for the real communion of Holy Eucharist, to which we return at the earliest opportunity, neither does "Spiritual Confession" substitute for absolution from a priest in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, to which also we return as soon as we can. But where some practical barrier impedes attending the Sacrament of Reconciliation, a "Spiritual Confession" helps us to express to God our remorse, contrition, and resolve to change our lives, and to have confidence of being heard and forgiven. Anyone who cannot receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist can still exercise these devotions of "Spiritual Confession" and Spiritual Communion. Indeed, saints and popes alike have encouraged daily examination of conscience, for which the Spiritual Confession here gives a framework, and may then be followed by a Spiritual Communion.

*Paul and Janet DeBoo, Northampton St. Thomas Team, Central Region*

## New Year

The New year is a good time to refresh our Rule of Life.

Look at the list adjacent. How many of these do you already practice?

Are there any that you would like to adopt for a time?

Go on, it might surprise you.

*Kiss Good Morning*  
**say I LOVE YOU**  
**LISTEN**  
*Always Be Grateful*  
**SPEAK KINDLY**  
*Learn from your mistakes*  
**respect one another**  
**LAUGH ♥ GIGGLE ♥ BE SILLY**  
**Encourage each other**  
*remember why you fell in love*  
**FIGHT FAIR**  
**BE THE FIRST TO say I'M SORRY**  
**KEEP YOUR PROMISES**  
*Have Fun Together*  
**hold hands every chance you get**  
**KISS GOODNIGHT**

# What can Quilts teach us about Marriage?

I am fascinated by the time, effort and creativity involved in making quilts, including the overall vision and design, the painstaking selection of fabrics, the detail of the patterns, and especially those quilts that tell a story. To enjoy the beauty of the quilt you need to step back to get a sense of its overall style, before allowing your gaze to focus on the individual details of each panel. At my son's school, the class made their teacher a quilt as a leaving present, with each panel reflecting something about their individual story. It was a very powerful gift of affirmation and a small window into what was important to each child at that stage of their lives.



The image of creating a quilt fits well with the shared ongoing project of the rich tapestry of marriage. As Christians we are conscious that whether each panel is good, bad, or indifferent it is sewn together and held by the thread that is Christ. At the beginning of married life, we bring our own stories, grafting these into the quilt that reflects our shared journey. It is easy to spot the momentous occasions: the wedding, the arrival of children and key events that bring a smile. However, life is not always lived in glorious technicolour and there can be times when the colours become muted, the panel less coherent and the story more difficult or even painful.

How will the panel of your shared marriage quilt look for 2020? It certainly won't be empty, even if we have felt that we were treading water or simply trying to cope with living in a new landscape with blurred boundaries.

How has your journey been changed? Do you notice little green shoots of hope? Whilst every marriage is unique there may be certain very real and common pressures which couples are facing at this time. This may require

holding the needle more carefully in order to craft the scene, which can be difficult when you may be facing uncertainties about the future.

Making a quilt requires an overall vision, a readiness to adapt when you encounter obstacles and acceptance of gentle guidance from others when needed. The Alliance of Catholic Marriage Organisations (the Alliance)[1] is a special quilt that has drawn together different charisms, gifts and insights to help couples to discover and rediscover the innate beauty of their 'project'. This ranges from those who initially help prepare the materials that are needed[2], those who offer essential repair kits[3] when there is a challenge, to those who refresh and re-equip the sewing box[4] and those who, through the gift of scripture[5], help to keep each panel held together by the love of Christ.

For me, the image of the quilt acts as a good analogy for the vocation of marriage, one that is part of the wider tapestry of the life of the parish. This is a vocation which we are all asked to affirm, celebrate and grow. As we move towards living with the pandemic, how can we, at the Alliance, help you to continue crafting your beautiful marriage story quilt, provide the materials to mend the patches, and help you find new fabrics and colours to sustain you through prayer?

[1] <http://www.allianceofcatholicmarriageorganisations.org.uk/>

[2] Marriage preparation – <https://www.marriagecare.org.uk/> and <https://engaged-encounter.org.uk/>

[3] Marriages under stress: relationship counselling – [Marriage Care](#); healing weekends (course) - [Retrouvaille](#)

[4] Marriage enrichment – [Marriage Encounter](#) and [Teams of Our Lady](#)

[5] Scriptural enrichment – [Two in One Flesh](#)

Reverend Roger Carr-Jones Marriage & Family Life Coordinator (inspired by an article written for <http://www.allianceofcatholicmarriageorganisations.org.uk/>)



# Readings and Prayers for January

## John 1:1-5,9-13

In the beginning was the Word:  
and the Word was with God  
and the Word was God.  
He was with God in the beginning.  
Through him all things came to be,  
not one thing had its being but through him.  
All that came to be had life in him  
and that life was the light of men,  
a light that shines in the dark,  
a light that darkness could not overpower.

The Word was the true light  
that enlightens all men;  
and he was coming into the world.  
He was in the world  
that had its being through him,  
and the world did not know him.  
He came to his own domain  
and his own people did not accept him.  
But to all who did accept him  
he gave power to become children of God.

## Responsorial Psalm -Isaiah 12

*With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.*

Truly, God is my salvation,  
I trust, I shall not fear.  
For the Lord is my strength, my song,  
he became my saviour.  
With joy you will draw water  
from the wells of salvation.

Give thanks to the Lord, give praise to his name!  
Make his mighty deeds known to the peoples!  
Declare the greatness of his name.

Sing a psalm to the Lord  
for he has done glorious deeds;  
make them known to all the earth!  
People of Zion, sing and shout for joy,  
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

## Concluding prayer

Lord, thank you for the opportunity that a new year brings, with its hopes and challenges. May we take strength and comfort in the wells of salvation to bring your hope, joy and compassion to others this year. Amen.



# Reflection for January

The gospel of John is possibly the most explicitly theological of the four gospels and Jesus "The Word" is its striking theological prism through which it portrays salvation history. One expression of the Trinity is: Jesus The Word uttered by the Father in the breath of the Spirit. This is essentially an outgoing image of God as an interpersonal entity reaching out to others and demanding a response. Yet this Word was ignored by his own people, but for those who did listen they became "children of God".

The prologue echoes the creation story of Genesis "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth". This is the paradox: that the One from whom all being originates came to be rejected by some of those whom He created. This shows a God, who paradoxically can be said to be present in His absence. In giving human beings free-will God gave them the capacity to rebel and reject God in Jesus Christ. Yet it was Jesus Christ as the Word of God who embraced our humanity and vulnerability to lead us back to the Father. Through the Incarnation God, in embracing our humanity, broke down the barriers between Heaven and Earth to enable us, through is death and resurrection, to ascend in due course to the Father on the condition that we listen and respond to the Word in the way we live out our lives.

In spite of all the advances in medicine modern industrial states have been shown to be powerless in the face of the current pandemic with the result that we have all been confronted by a vulnerability that we presumed had been conquered. What is required is a humility and a respect for God's creation that has been entrusted to us for the benefit not only of ourselves but of future generations.

The requirement to listen in love is the basis not only of the Christian life but also that of the married state. The love of husband and wife through their children mirrors the love of the Trinity that is characteristic of the Gospel of John. This response is elaborated in the responsorial psalm where there is that recognition that we are dependent on God and that our response needs to be of thanksgiving and praise. As we start a new year let us reflect on how we can listen to the Word and respond in thanksgiving in our lives through the power of the Spirit.

Fr Bill Muir



# Readings and Prayers for February

## **Job 7:1-4,6-7**

Job began to speak:

Is not man's life on earth nothing more than pressed service,  
his time no better than hired drudgery?

Like the slave, sighing for the shade,  
or the workman with no thought but his wages,  
months of delusion I have assigned to me,  
nothing for my own but nights of grief.

Lying in bed I wonder, 'When will it be day?'

Risen I think, 'How slowly evening comes!'

Restlessly I fret till twilight falls.

Swifter than a weaver's shuttle my days have passed,  
and vanished, leaving no hope behind.

Remember that my life is but a breath,  
and that my eyes will never again see joy.

## **Psalms 146(147):1-6**

*Praise the Lord who heals the broken-hearted.*

Praise the Lord for he is good;  
sing to our God for he is loving:  
to him our praise is due.

The Lord builds up Jerusalem  
and brings back Israel's exiles,  
he heals the broken-hearted,  
he binds up all their wounds.  
He fixes the number of the stars;  
he calls each one by its name.

Our Lord is great and almighty;  
his wisdom can never be measured.  
The Lord raises the lowly;  
he humbles the wicked to the dust.

## **Concluding prayer**

Lord, help us not to be discouraged in the face of difficulties in our lives. May we find the grace to praise you even through tough times, to find hope and reach out to others with compassion and love. Amen.

# Reflection for February

It was on one evening on my first visit to the Holy Land that our Israeli guide asked us to look up into the hills above the Sea of Galilee. The sun had set and the house and street lights were beginning to twinkle in the approaching gloom. We were looking up towards the hilltop village/city of Chorazin and our guide assured us that this was the 'town built on a hill (that) cannot be hidden' referred to by Jesus in our reading for today. And indeed as its lights twinkled in the approaching darkness, we could see that the village would be difficult to hide – unless a 20<sup>th</sup> century power cut caused the lighting to fail!

Of course it was this city that Jesus criticised (with Bethsaida and Capernaum) with his 'woes' for their refusal to listen to his message and repent. They had lost their 'saltiness' and hidden their light.

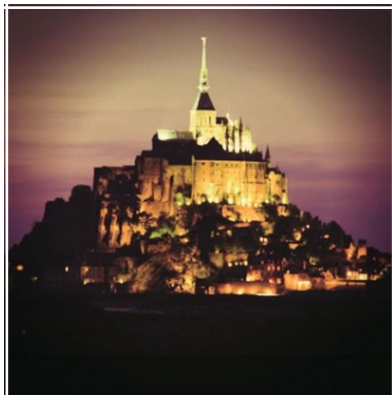
As we enter into this season of Lent, the second during this pandemic, we ponder on how we can both individually and as spouses, prepare ourselves to celebrate the forthcoming great feast of Easter, the feast of the Risen Lord. How will I, how will we as a family, be light to the world, how will be salt to the earth, those around us?

Salt was so valuable in Jesus's time that the Latin 'salis' gave its name to the weekly wage – salary. How can we give value to our lives and the lives of those around us?

In the responsorial psalm, the psalmist extols us to follow God's law to love God and our neighbour – he/she says 'how happy' we will be... if we seek Him with all (our) hearts.

In seeking Him may our light shine before others, as it gives light to everyone in our homes!

Fr Chris Dobson



# Readings and Prayers for March

## John 2:13-25

Just before the Jewish Passover Jesus went up to Jerusalem, and in the Temple he found people selling cattle and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting at their counters there. Making a whip out of some cord, he drove them all out of the Temple, cattle and sheep as well, scattered the money-changers' coins, knocked their tables over and said to the pigeon-sellers, 'Take all this out of here and stop turning my Father's house into a market.'

Then his disciples remembered the words of scripture: Zeal for your house will devour me. The Jews intervened and said, 'What sign can you show us to justify what you have done?' Jesus answered, 'Destroy this sanctuary, and in three days I will raise it up.' The Jews replied, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this sanctuary: are you going to raise it up in three days?' But he was speaking of the sanctuary that was his body, and when Jesus rose from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the scripture and the words he had said.

During his stay in Jerusalem for the Passover many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he gave, but Jesus knew them all and did not trust himself to them; he never needed evidence about any man; he could tell what a man had in him.

## Psalm 18(19):8-11

*You, Lord, have the message of eternal life.*

The law of the Lord is perfect,  
it revives the soul.

The rule of the Lord is to be trusted,  
it gives wisdom to the simple.

The precepts of the Lord are right,  
they gladden the heart.

The command of the Lord is clear,  
it gives light to the eyes.

The fear of the Lord is holy,  
abiding for ever.

The decrees of the Lord are truth  
and all of them just.

They are more to be desired than gold,  
than the purest of gold  
and sweeter are they than honey,  
than honey from the comb.

## Concluding Prayer

Lord, open our eyes to see our world and our lives as you do. Give us the courage to act to ensure your truth and justice so that all can live with the dignity that comes from being your children. Amen.



# Reflection for March

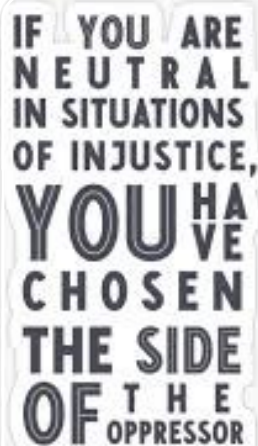
Jesus, I think it is safe to say, would have been familiar with the daily presence in the temple in Jerusalem of the money-changers and the sellers of animals for sacrifice. Even the Old Testament allowed for them, it seems. His uncharacteristic act of violence was what is called a prophetic sign: he overturned the tables and drove out the bankers and traders for two reasons. The first reason was because they were abusing the holiness of God's house. The second reason was because he was acting out what was about to happen to himself in his body, the new temple of God's presence and at the same time he was prophesying that the magnificent temple built by Herod the Great which was one of the wonders of the world was going to be overthrown and destroyed by the Romans in AD 70.

Trying to be brief, I draw two lessons out of this passage. The first lesson is that there may come times in our lives when we need to speak out against an injustice or form of abuse against ourselves, or against someone else, or against God's law that we, for one reason or another, have tolerated for a long time but now we feel compelled to make our true feelings felt.

The second lesson is that Jesus was talking about the sanctity of his body, and that reminds us that in him as members of his body the Church we too are holy, even in our bodies. This is an important message for our age, that is, that our bodies are sacred in God's eyes, that we are temples in which God has chosen to dwell. If we can appreciate the dignity and sanctity that God has bestowed upon us in our bodies, we might appreciate better the dignity and sanctity of the people around us, even if their bodies are old and frail or damaged or deformed.

Abbot Martin McLaughlin

Cheltenham 1



IF YOU ARE  
NEUTRAL  
IN SITUATIONS  
OF INJUSTICE,  
YOU HAVE  
CHOSEN  
THE SIDE  
OF THE  
OPPRESSOR

# Last notes...

## The Magnificat (Lk 1: 46-56)

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord;  
and my spirit exults in God my Saviour,  
because he has looked upon his lowly handmaid.

Yes, from this day forward all generations will call me blessed,  
for the almighty has done great things for me.  
Holy is His name, and His mercy reaches from age to age for those who fear Him.

He has shown the power of His arm.  
He has routed the proud of heart.  
He has pulled down princes from their thrones and exalted the lowly.  
The hungry He has filled with good things, the rich sent empty away.

He has come to the help of Israel His servant, mindful of His mercy  
According to the promise He made to our ancestors  
of His mercy to Abraham and to his descendants forever.

Our Lady of the Home, pray for us.

## STOP PRESS: FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Yes, real events to fit into your busy  
social calendar this December!

**Wed 16 December 7.30 p.m. Next  
monthly Mixed Team meetings**  
across GB and Ireland via zoom- con-  
tact Regional couple for dial in details.

**Marriage Masterclass** via facebook.  
More events coming in new year.



Equipes Notre Dame, Teams, is an  
international Christian movement for  
married couples of all ages.