



Catholic Parish of King's Lynn

Church of Our Lady of the Annunciation

London Road, King's Lynn, Norfolk. PE30 5HQ

Holy Family Church

Field Lane, Gaywood, King's Lynn, Norfolk. PE30 4AY

DEACON SHAUN MORRISON'S WEEKLY BULLETIN

Sunday, February 04, 2024

Dear Friends,

Today is the 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

"Praise the Lord who heals the broken-hearted"

The link for the live stream of the 11.30am Mass from Our Lady's is:

[https://www.youtube.com/live/8qeFnsT5zqI?
si=UbdCv7SMSMnP7vFV](https://www.youtube.com/live/8qeFnsT5zqI?si=UbdCv7SMSMnP7vFV)

From the Office of Readings for the Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time:

A reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Galatians

The gospel preached by Paul

From Paul to the churches of Galatia, and from all the brothers who are here with me, an apostle who does not owe his authority to men or his appointment to any human being but who has been appointed by Jesus Christ and by God the Father who raised Jesus from the dead. We wish you the grace and peace of God our Father and of the Lord Jesus Christ, who in order to rescue us from this present wicked world sacrificed himself for our sins, in accordance with the will of God our Father, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

I am astonished at the promptness with which you have turned away from the one who called you and have decided to follow a different version of the Good News. Not that there can be more than one Good News; it is merely that some troublemakers among you want to change the Good News of Christ; and let me warn you that if anyone preaches a version of the Good News different from the one we have already preached to you, whether it be ourselves or an angel from heaven, he is to be condemned. I am only repeating what we told you before: if anyone preaches a version of the Good News different from the one you have already heard, he is to be condemned. So now whom am I trying to please – man, or God? Would you say it is men's approval I am looking for? If I still wanted that, I should not be what I am – a servant of Christ.

The fact is, brothers, and I want you to realise this, the Good News I preached is not a human message that I was given by men, it is something I learnt only through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

A reading from St. Augustine's explanation of the Letter to the Galatians

The need to realise how powerful is God's grace

Paul writes to the Galatians to make them understand that by God's grace they are no longer under the law. When the Gospel was preached to them, there were some among them of Jewish origin known as circumcisers – though they called themselves Christians – who did not grasp the gift they had received. They still wanted to be under the burden of the law. Now God had imposed that burden on those who were slaves to sin and not on servants of justice. That is to say, God had given a just law to unjust men in order to show them their sin, not to take it away. For sin is taken away only by the gift of faith that works through love. The Galatians had already received this gift, but the circumcisers claimed that the Gospel would not save them unless they underwent circumcision and were willing to observe also the other traditional Jewish rites.

The Galatians, therefore, began to question Paul's preaching of the Gospel because he did not require Gentiles to follow Jewish observances as other apostles had done. Even Peter had yielded to the scandalised protests of the circumcisers. He pretended to believe that the Gospel would not save the Gentiles unless they fulfilled the burden of the law. But Paul recalled him from such dissimulation, as is shown in this very same letter. A similar issue arises in Paul's letter to the Romans, but with an evident difference. Through his letter to them, Paul was able to resolve the strife and controversy that had developed between the Jewish and Gentile converts.

In the present letter Paul is writing to persons who were profoundly influenced and disturbed by the circumcisers. The Galatians had begun to believe them and to think that Paul had not preached rightly, since he had not ordered them to be circumcised. And so the Apostle begins by saying: I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting him who called you to the glory of Christ, and turning to another gospel.

After this there comes a brief introduction to the point at issue. But remember in the very opening of the letter Paul had said that he was an apostle not from men nor by any man, a statement that does not appear in any other letter of his. He is making it quite clear that the circumcisers, for their part, are not from God but from men, and that his authority in preaching the Gospel must be considered equal to that of

the other apostles. For he was called to be an apostle not from men nor by any man, but through God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ.

Responsory

- ℟. The law was our tutor, bringing us to Christ, to find in faith our justification.* When faith comes, then we are no longer under the rule of a tutor.
- ℣. Until faith came, we were all being kept in bondage to the law, waiting for the faith that was one day to be revealed.* When faith comes, then we are no longer under the rule of a tutor.

Monday **5th February** is the Memorial of St. Agatha, Virgin and Martyr.

From Universalis:

She was martyred at Catania in Sicily, probably during the persecution of Decius (250-253). Devotion to her was widespread in the Church in the earliest times and she is mentioned in the Roman Canon of the Mass.

From Catholic.org:

St. Agatha, also known as Agatha of Sicily, is one of the most highly venerated virgin martyrs of the Catholic Church. It is believed that she was born around 231 in either Catania or Palermo, Sicily to a rich and noble family.

From her very early years, the notably beautiful Agatha dedicated her life to God. She became a consecrated virgin, a state in life where young women choose to remain celibate and give themselves wholly to Jesus and the Church in a life of prayer and service. That did not stop men from desiring her and making unwanted advances toward her.

However, one of the men who desired Agatha, whose name was Quintianus, because he was of a high diplomatic ranking, thought he could force her to turn away from her vow and force her to marry. His persistent proposals were consistently spurned by Agatha, so Quintianus, knowing she was a Christian during the persecution of Decius, had her arrested and brought before the judge. He was the Judge.

He expected her to give in to his demands when she was faced with torture and possible death, but she simply reaffirmed her belief in God by praying: "Jesus Christ, Lord of all, you see my heart, you know my desires. Possess all that I am. I am your sheep: make me worthy to overcome the devil." With tears falling from her eyes, she prayed for courage.

Tuesday **6th February** is the Memorial of St. Paul Miki and Companions, Martyrs.

From Universalis:

<https://universalis.com/europe.england.eastanglia/20240206/today.htm>

St Paul Miki (1564/6 - 1597)

He was born in Japan between 1564 and 1566. He joined the Society of Jesus and preached the gospel to the Japanese people with great success. When a persecution of the Catholics arose he was arrested together with twenty-five others. Mocked and tortured, they were eventually taken to Nagasaki on 5 February 1597, bound to crosses and speared.

From the Office of Readings:

From an account of the martyrdom of Saint Paul Miki and his companions, by a contemporary writer

You shall be my witnesses

The crosses were set in place. Father Pasio and Father Rodriguez took turns encouraging the victims. Their steadfast behaviour was wonderful to see. The Father Bursar stood motionless, his eyes turned heavenward. Brother Martin gave thanks to God's goodness by singing psalms. Again and again he repeated: "Into your hands, Lord, I entrust my life." Brother Francis Branco also thanked God in a loud voice. Brother Gonsalvo in a very loud voice kept saying the Our Father and Hail Mary.

Our brother, Paul Miki, saw himself standing now in the noblest pulpit he had ever filled. To his "congregation" he began by proclaiming himself a Japanese and a Jesuit. He was dying for the Gospel he preached. He gave thanks to God for this wonderful blessing and he ended his "sermon" with these words: "As I come to this supreme moment of my life, I am sure none of you would suppose I want to deceive you. And so I tell you plainly: there is no way to be saved except the Christian way. My religion teaches me to pardon my enemies and all who have offended me. I do gladly pardon the Emperor and all who have sought my death. I beg them to seek baptism and be Christians themselves."

Then he looked at his comrades and began to encourage them in their final struggle. Joy glowed in all their faces, and in Louis' most of all. When a Christian in the crowd cried out to him that he would soon be in heaven, his hands, his whole body strained upward with such joy that every eye was fixed on him.

Anthony, hanging at Louis' side, looked towards heaven and called upon the holy names – "Jesus, Mary!" He began to sing a psalm: "Praise the Lord, you children!" (He learned it in catechism class in Nagasaki. They take care there to teach the children some psalms to help them learn their catechism).

Others kept repeating "Jesus, Mary!" Their faces were serene. Some of them even took to urging the people standing by to live worthy Christian lives. In these and other ways they showed their readiness to die.

Then, according to Japanese custom, the four executioners began to unsheathe their spears. At this dreadful sight, all the Christians cried out, "Jesus, Mary!" And the storm of anguished weeping then rose to batter the very skies. The executioners killed them one by one. One thrust of the spear, then a second blow. It was over in a very short time.

Thursday 8th February is the Day of Prayer for Victims of Trafficking.

Today is also the feast day of St. Josephine Bakhita, Virgin.
From the Diocesan yearbook:

St. Josephine Bakhita is the Sudanese saint who at the age of nine was kidnapped and sold into slavery. She suffered terribly at the hands of her kidnappers so much so that she forgot her birth name. Her kidnappers gave her the name 'Bakhita' which means 'Fortunate'.

Prayer:

O God, who led St. Josephine Bakhita from abject slavery to the dignity of being your daughter and a bride of Christ, grant, we pray, that by her example we may show constant love for the Lord Jesus crucified, remaining steadfast in charity and prompt to show compassion. Amen.

Saturday 10th February is the Memorial of St. Scholastica, Virgin.

This saint, who was St. Benedict's sister, traditionally his twin, consecrated herself to God from her earliest years, as we learn from St. Gregory. It is not known where she lived, whether at home or in a community; but after her brother had moved to Monte Cassino, she settled at Plombariola in that same neighbourhood, probably founding and ruling a nunnery about five miles to the south of St. Benedict's monastery. St. Gregory tells us that St. Benedict governed nuns as well as monks, and it seems clear that St. Scholastica must have been their abbess, under his direction. She used to visit her brother once a year and, since she was not allowed to enter his monastery, he used to go with some of his monks to meet her at a house a little way off. They spent these visits in praising God and in conferring together on spiritual matters.

Source: Butler's Lives of the Saints. (New Concise Edition)

The beginning of Lent is now not far away. Wednesday 14th February is Ash Wednesday so now is a good time to be thinking and praying about your preparations for the Holy Season.

The link to our YouTube channel is:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8V030I7usRZiKoTlwBAKq>

And the link to our Parish Website:

<http://www.catholicparish-kingslynn.org.uk/>

God bless

Shaun

Deacon Shaun Morrison



Saint Josephine Bakhita

Saint Josephine Margaret Bakhita was born around 1869 in the village of Olgossa in the Darfur region of Sudan. She was a member of the Daju people and her uncle was a tribal chief. Due to her family lineage, she grew up happy and relatively prosperous, saying that as a child, she did not know suffering.

Historians believe that sometime in February 1877, Josephine was kidnapped by Arab slave traders. Although she was just a child, she was forced to walk

barefoot over 600 miles to a slave market in El Obeid. She was bought and sold at least twice during the gruelling journey.

For the next 12 years she would be bought, sold and given away over a dozen times. She spent so much time in captivity that she forgot her original name.

As a slave, her experiences varied from fair treatment to cruel. Her first owner, a wealthy Arab, gave her to his daughters as a maid. The assignment was easy until she offended her owner's son, possibly for the crime of breaking a vase. As punishment, she was beaten so severely she was incapacitated for a month. After that, she was sold.

One of her owners was a Turkish general who gave her to his wife and mother-in-law who both beat her daily. Josephine wrote that as soon as one wound would heal, they would inflict another.

She told about how the general's wife ordered her to be scarred. As her mistress watched, ready with a whip, another woman drew patterns on her skin with flour, then cut into her flesh with a blade. She rubbed the wounds with salt to make the scars permanent. She would suffer a total of 114 scars from this abuse.

In 1883, the Turkish general sold her to the Italian Vice Consul, Callisto Legani. He was a much kinder master and he did not beat her. When it was time for him to return to Italy, she begged to be taken with him, and he agreed.

After a long and dangerous journey across Sudan, the Red Sea, and the Mediterranean, they arrived in Italy. She was given away to another family as a gift and she served them as a nanny.

Her new family also had dealings in Sudan had when her mistress decided to travel to Sudan without Josephine, she placed her in the custody of the Canossian Sisters in Venice.

While she was in the custody of the sisters, she came to learn about God. According to Josephine, she had always known about God, who created all things, but she did not know who He was. The sisters answered her questions. She was deeply moved by her time with the sisters and discerned a call to follow Christ.

When her mistress returned from Sudan, Josephine refused to leave. Her mistress spent three days trying to persuade her to leave the sisters, but Josephine remained steadfast. This caused the superior of the institute for baptismal candidates among the sisters to complain to Italian authorities on Josephine's behalf.

The case went to court, and the court found that slavery had been outlawed in Sudan before Josephine was born, so she could not be lawfully made slave. She was declared free.

For the first time in her life, Josephine was free and could choose what to do with her life. She chose to remain with the Canossian Sisters.

She was baptized on January 9, 1890 and took the name Josephine Margaret and Fortunata. (Fortunata is the Latin translation for her Arabic name, Bakhita). She also received the sacraments of her first holy communion and confirmation on the same day. These three sacraments are the sacraments of initiation into the Church and were always given together in the early Church. The Archbishop who gave her the sacraments was none other than Giuseppe Sarto, the Cardinal Patriarch of Venice, who would later become Pope Pius X.