



# 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

### Homilies — September 14/15, 2024

Dear Friends,

I hope your week is going well.

Here are the texts of two homilies from the weekend for you.

- 1 - Fr. Gordon's for "Evangelii Gaudium" Sunday. (Preached — 24th Sunday In Ordinary Time)
- 2 - Cardinal Vincent Nichols' For the National Eucharistic Congress (Adoremus) Preached on 14th Sept 24.

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#### Fr Gordon's Homily for "Evangelii Gaudium" Sunday.

This Sunday of the year used to be known as "Home Missions" Sunday, but a few years ago our Bishops' Conference changed that title to "Evangelii Gaudium" Sunday, to reflect Pope Francis Apostolic Exhortation of the same name.

The Apostolic Exhortation is all about living out the joy of the Gospel, including recognising our gifts and talents and putting them to work in the life of the Church, thus building up the Body of Christ. Another way of expressing that would be the question "How do we help each other to grow in our practice of our Christian faith?" – that is what "mission" is all about.

Of course, at the absolute heart of the practice of our faith is what we are doing right now – our celebration of Mass. I choose these words carefully – our celebration of Mass. Not our attendance at Mass, not coming to Mass, not hearing Mass, but our celebration of Mass. We come together and we celebrate Mass together. As a priest, celebrating Mass is not something I do for you, or to you – it is something WE do together, because it is together that we are the Church. You cannot be a passive Christian – that is a contradiction in terms. Being a Christian means activity and action, and that leads

to our witness and our mission.

It is what we do together when we come to Mass that I especially want to consider today. It is true that just our coming into this place is a witness and testimony to our faith but as Catholics we speak about "assisting at Mass". Coming together in this Church we are here to assist in ensuring that we together make a fit and proper offering to God.

We have a word for the activity of assisting in the fit and proper offering of Mass - that word is "ministry".

The first ministry for the congregation to undertake is a very important one – it is the ministry of participation. This is not a performance, it is not a show, it is a communal activity, so it matters that we all actively play our part, especially when that part is speaking or singing out loud.

The congregational response of "**Amen**" at the end of a prayer, the response of "Thanks be to God" at the end of a reading, and all the other responses a congregation is asked to make should be big and confident, and especially at the end of the Eucharistic Prayer. The congregational "Amen" after the Eucharistic Prayer is the most important word any of you can say during Mass, because it is your assent to what the priest has just completed – the consecration of bread and wine into the Eucharistic real presence of the body and blood of Christ. That "Amen" is your greeting to the Lord, your welcome to him become real on the altar.

But there are numerous other specific ministries which need to be undertaken for a fit and proper offering of Mass to be made. Especially the ministry of reading the word of God and the ministry of assisting with the giving of Holy Communion are very important, but there are also other ministries which matter. The ministry of people at the door to welcome people arriving to assist at Mass, the ministry of assisting with the offertory procession and the taking of the collection, the ministry of making music to enhance Mass, either by playing

an instrument or by singing, are perhaps the more obvious ones but there are other less obvious or visible ministries that need to be undertaken.

There is a need for Eucharistic Ministers to assist the clergy in ensuring that the sick and housebound receive Holy Communion regularly at home. There is the need for Catechists to prepare our children for first confession and first Holy Communion and there is the need, which is currently not being met at all in our Parish, for catechists and others to help children hear and understand the word of God in an age-appropriate way with a children's Liturgy of the Word.

There are other more or less invisible ministries that need to be undertaken. The matter of preparing Church before Mass, and clearing up afterwards, is essential for the fit and proper offering of Mass, and the monies that you generously put in the collection baskets have to be brought to account in a responsible and orderly way.

Here in this Parish you might think achieving all these ministries effectively shouldn't be a problem. On a typical Sunday, across our three English language Masses, at least 500 (plus) people come through the doors to assist. But we do have a problem! In recent months and years as people have moved away, or age has taken its inevitable toll, we have become short of people to undertake these ministries - all of them.

So today, on *Evangelii Gaudium* Sunday, on Home Mission Sunday, I am inviting you to ask what YOU can do to put yourself more at the service of the Church, and of your brothers and sisters in Christ, so that together we make a fit and worthy offering to God when we celebrate Mass, and thus support the mission of the Church in this place.

Finally, something important – don't try to say you are not worthy to undertake such ministries. Of course, you are not "worthy" – NONE of us are. I am not "worthy" of the priesthood. But God uses us, unworthy as we are, in his service and to do his work – because he has nobody else! God – and your Parish – needs you!

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**Cardinal Vincent Nichols**, president of the Bishops' Conference, gave a homily at *Adoremus* this Saturday (14 September), saying the "Eucharist, then, is the fount and source of all our efforts". The day before *Evangelii Gaudium* Sunday (15 September), a day to renew all missionary

efforts in England and Wales, Cardinal Nichols said "every act of evangelisation" is inspired by the Eucharist and our love of Christ.

Source: <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/adoremus-the-eucharist-is-the-heart-of-all-mission-says-cardinal/>

### The Homily:

Many years ago now, I was waiting in the office of the Prefect of the Papal Household, Archbishop Harvey, when a fine porcelain vase on display there caught my eye. It was clearly English: Spode or Royal Worcester, I thought. On the front of the vase was a painting of the façade of this College, St Mary's Oscott. Filled with curiosity, I turned it around. On the reverse was a painting of Pugin's vision of a procession of the Blessed Sacrament across the front of the College. The vase was dated 1838. Later we concluded that it had been presented to Pope Gregory XVI by Cardinal Wiseman to mark the opening of the College.

So our Eucharistic celebration and procession today have deep roots in the history of this very place. Here we gladly join with the Church throughout the world in celebrating the 53rd World Eucharistic Congress, taking place at this time in Quito, Ecuador.

With people all over the world, we place ourselves in the presence of the Lord in this most Blessed Sacrament, carried in procession and we celebrate again the Sacrifice of the Mass through which this Sacrament flows.

In this afternoon's procession, the Blessed Sacrament is held before us in a Monstrance. In the College exhibition, for viewing today, there is another Monstrance worthy of note. Made in the 16th century, this Monstrance was lost to the Church. But in the nineteenth century, it was spotted in a jeweller's shop in Chelsea and bought by a James Joseph Wheble, brother of a priest from this College. The place in the Monstrance for the Blessed Sacrament had been filled with a clock. James Wheble had it restored and, in 1860 gave it to Oscott where it is now treasured. May all things be so restored in Christ!

Today is the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross and the Readings from Scripture given to us for this Feast shape this reflection.

During the Mass, the Lord is raised again before us. This enacts the moment and manner in which Jesus is raised before us, and before the whole world, embracing the Cross, 'mounting' its wood, giving

himself entirely in his selfless, timeless, redeeming sacrifice.

How strongly this is expressed in the Gospel: 'The Son of Man must be lifted up so that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.'

How wondrously this is prefigured and promised in the reading from the Book of Numbers: 'Moses fashioned a bronze serpent and put it on a standard and if anyone was bitten by the fiery serpents, he looked on the bronze serpent and lived.'

How powerfully this takes place again, in each and every celebration of the Mass, when the Lord is held before us with the proclamation: 'Behold the Lamb of God!'

At that moment the eye of faith beholds Jesus, whole and entire in his great act of sacrifice. Here we behold the entire mystery of faith, by which our human reality, in all its brokenness and poverty, is taken up to the Creator and the flow of saving grace is opened up, ever anew.

'Behold the Lamb of God'. Here every act of loving kindness, of sacrificial giving, whether that of a tired parent, a dear friend, a harassed nurse, an emergency worker, school teacher to name but a few – finds its utter fulfilment. Here every personal, loving sacrifice becomes enfolded into the work of our salvation.

'Behold the Lamb of God!' Here is our salvation, for he is the only one 'who takes away the sins of the world'. Like water into a sponge, every act of cruelty, of vindictiveness, of exploitation, every sin that disfigures our humanity is absorbed by Jesus on the cross. Its weight, its awful burden, compresses him utterly, in the garden forcing out from his body both sweat and blood until, on the cross, 'it is accomplished' and Jesus 'gives up his spirit'.

This is all here, before our eyes. We can only bow in humble adoration and murmur 'How great thou art, how great thou art!'

Yet there is more. Not only do we hear the great proclamation, 'Behold the Lamb', but there is also an invitation. Here, in the Mass, we are given this Lamb. He puts himself into our hands, into our hearts. He not only says 'Behold the Lamb', but also 'Hold the Lamb of God'. 'Hold me' he says to us, 'in your love, in your heart, with all the tenderness and devotion you can find'. 'Hold me, take me, receive me, so that I may live in you, so that your every word and deed may be filled with my presence.' You see, we too are called to be part of his mission: to

take away the sins of the world. We are to do so by our love, our courage, our service in his name with his Holy Spirit.

The Eucharist, then, is the fount and source of all our efforts, of every act of evangelisation. As we seek renewal in our mission let's take to heart that every act of dialogue and proclamation, of service and compassion, flows from our love of Christ. And every action is an invitation, implicit or explicit, to those whom we serve to come to know and love the Lord.

Behold the Lamb of God! Hold the Lamb of God! And one more step still to be taken: Hold onto the Lamb of God!

Using the imagery of the Book of Numbers, we know there are many fiery serpents in our midst, in our world today. They may look innocuous, coming with charming words. They may fill us with fear, imprisoning our best, creative spirit. They can use every means of communication, ancient and contemporary. But when we face them, whether in loneliness or in the dead of night, in times of seeming helplessness and despair – which we all know – we are to hold on to him, gaze on him, cling to him, stay safe in the shelter of his wings.

This is the pathway of our discipleship, enacted in this Mass and in the procession this afternoon. We are summoned, by the loving plan of the Father, to render all praise to God and to sing constantly of the beauty of his creation. In our pilgrimage, we are constantly guided by the Holy Spirit, in discernment and decision, in the company of the Church. And, at every step of the way Jesus accompanies us, never leaving us alone, always within our reach, always there before us, most especially in the Eucharist, in this most Blessed Sacrament.

'Behold the Lamb of God!' 'Take hold of the Lamb of God!' 'Hold onto the Lamb of God', cling to him with all your might!

This is our honour and joy. This is our Eucharistic heart. This is the faith of the Church and we are proud to profess it.

Amen.

✠ **Cardinal Vincent Nichols**

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God bless,

**Shaun**

**Deacon Shaun Morrison**