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22nd January 2023

3rd SUNDAY OF THE CHURCH YEAR

MASS TIMES & INTENTIONS

Sat 21 Jan	5.30 pm	St George's	People of the parish
Sun 22 Jan	9.30 am	St George's	Valerie Stone RIP
	11.15 am	Holy Spirit	For Christian unity
	6.00 pm	St George's	Penny Earley RIP
Mon 23 Jan	9.30 am	St George's	Priest's own intention
Tue 24 Jan	9.30 am	St George's	Donor's intention, St Anthony
	6.30 pm	St George's	Reception into church, Nuala O'Riordan RIP
Wed 25 Jan	9.30 am	St George's	Holy Souls, especially of our parish
	10.30 am	St George's	Requiem Mass, Nuala O'Riordan RIP
Thu 26 Jan	9.30 am	St George's	Rajee RIP
Fri 27 Jan	9.30 am	St George's	In thanksgiving, St Anthony
Sat 28 Jan	9.30 am	St George's	Recently deceased clergy intentions
	5.30 pm	St George's	Annie McCandless RIP, 100 th birthday memories
Sun 29 Jan	9.30 am	St George's	Des Murphy RIP, 13 th anniv.
	11.15 am	Holy Spirit	People of the Parish
	6.00 pm	St George's	Michael Donovan RIP, 2 nd anniv.

GOSPEL REFLECTION:

Jesus began his public ministry in Galilee, as predicted by Isaiah (see 9:1-2). Tragically, the chief priests and Pharisees, who were familiar with the scriptures, were so stubborn, blind and resistant, and said to Nicodemus, 'Are you from Galilee, too? Look into it, and you will find that a prophet does not come out of Galilee', (John 7:52 NIV)

Jesus' initial preaching began like John the Baptist's, with a simple proclamation about the need for conversion and change: 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near' (v.17). Repentance doesn't sit comfortably with us today, probably because we've lost a sense of sin and consequently have also lost a sense of the need to repent and turn back to God. We strive for a different grammar of faith, and sin, repentance, contrition and conversion are rarely mentioned.

The Greek word *metanoia* means 'to change one's mind or change direction'. The Holy Spirit works in us to convict us of sin and lead us towards repentance, in other words, to change our minds and think differently. The Holy Spirit is the mind-changer but more importantly the heart-changer.

Repentance in this sense isn't difficult because the Holy Spirit leads us to see how destructive and dark ways of thinking harm and undermine our wellbeing and happiness. God created us with the gift of free will, which is why repentance is so vital. God assists us with grace but also respects our free will and ability to choose and decide whether to sin or not to sin, to turn back to God or to remain in our rebellion. Once we repent, once we turn back to God, once we take that first step, we open ourselves up to his healing mercy. Repentance unlocks the door to the royal road, the highway of holiness, the way of the Spirit.

Lord, thank you for the gift of repentance and for the chance to change, turn over a new leaf, and renounce ways of thinking and acting that harm me and those around me.

CHRISTIAN UNITY: The Octave, eight days of prayers for Christian unity, begins on Wednesday, 18th January until Wednesday, 25th January. We pray that as many Christians and denominations as possible will be united by their authentic teaching and proclaiming of Jesus Our Lord and Saviour. There is one Lord, one faith and one baptism, one Lord Jesus Christ the saviour of all humankind. May all Christians be faithful to his divine teaching and guidance so more people will come to accept him and follow him.

CATHOLIC NEWS FOR JANUARY: A few copies still at church. Lots of interesting news of events in our Diocese of Nottingham.

CONFESSIONS: SATURDAY ONLY: 10:15 – 10:45

SAINTS THIS WEEK:

Tues 24 Jan: St Francis de Sales, Bishop & Doctor

Wed 25 Jan: The Conversion of St Paul

Thurs 26 Jan: Sts Timothy & Titus, Bishops

Sat 28 Jan: St Thomas Aquinas, Priest & Doctor

Wednesday, January 25th, The Conversion of St Paul

With Christ There is Freedom

I was led by hand by my companions...Acts 22:11

The story of Paul's conversion journey reminds me that a kind of unholy zeal can seize anyone, including me, convincing us that we have power to convict others. The costs of such vehemence can be harmful. We might even become persecutors of those who are unlike us, as Paul was prior to knowing Christ. The trap is set when, overcome with zeal, I may pull others into my twisted vision of how things should be or could be.

But with Christ, there can be a better, holy zeal, one that offers others the freedom simply "to be". With Christ, we gain a liberty to live wholeheartedly in truth. With Christ, loving companionship guides us and moves us forward, helping us to deepen our union with God and each other. In community, and as community, we expand and invite others into the fold of friendship and freedom. This is where true witness occurs, it makes love evident. In the communion, we offer a sign and proclaim the Gospel: With Jesus, we are free.

Sr Julia Walsh F.S.P.A.

CELEBRATE LIFE:

Kindness and truth shall meet; justice and peace shall kiss. Psalm 85:11

January 23rd marks the 50th anniversary of the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States to legalise abortion, and it has a different feel to it. Decades of passionate pro-life labours on many fronts and intense prayers were rewarded in the overturning of

Roe v. Wade. Is it simply a matter of chance that this event took place last June on the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus?

As the field of action shifts away from the courts to the minds and hearts of citizens and their legislators, the reverencing of life from womb to tomb remains a Gospel imperative. No one can claim full victory until the giftedness of life at every stage is restored to its proper place in our throwaway culture. Through the intercession of our Blessed Mother, may we all do the part given us to affirm and celebrate life.

Fr Dennis Gallagher. A.A.

OUR SCHOOLS

A new term and a New Year 2023. We pray for our schools, especially St George's and St Benedict's. We thank God for all the staff and pupils as they begin a new year of learning and development. May God keep them safe and well and inspire all to make good progress