

TO CONTACT THE PARISH/FATHER NEIL

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Parish Website – www.catholicchurchneath.org.uk

The St. Joseph's Community Support Group. If you need help with shopping, collecting prescriptions etc please contact Fr. Neil or Siobhan (07811931971) **YOU ARE NOT ALONE!** We hope to keep in contact with all parishioners over seventy by post – provided that stamps (and envelopes) are still available and the postal service continues to function. Otherwise, the Newsletter will continue to appear (God willing and health permitting) on the Parish Website each week. If you are aware of other parishioners who may not otherwise be aware of the help being offered by the St. Joseph's Support Group, please pass this information on to them. **MANY THANKS** to all our volunteers for helping those in need at this difficult and challenging time. Thank you to Siobhan for co-ordinating the Community Support Group, and to our SVP Group and Legion of Mary for keeping in contact with parishioners by phone

Coronavirus – Important up-date The Archbishops of England and Wales are engaged with the Westminster government on the desire of Catholics that churches should re-open for private prayers and devotions. In Wales the Faith Communities Forum is actively engaged with the Deputy First Minister, Jane Hutt, on how to lift restrictions on places of worship. The big question relates to **controlling and stewarding** access, and how places of worship are to be sanitised.

Archbishop George informs us that if and when permission is given for our churches to re-open, they will be subject to strict health and safety conditions as are all public buildings. Before the churches can begin to re-open here in the Diocese of Menevia, there needs to be a diocesan wide supply of PPE and sanitising equipment – even to enter the church for private prayer. The church authorities are working on an initial order for a supply covering the next three months. This will involve a significant cost for each parish. In order that the churches can re-open there will need to be at least **two volunteers** always present to ensure that everyone entering the church follows proper procedures. Thus far, only a few have volunteered and of those it may be that only those under seventy years of age can be accepted as volunteers. We await further guidance. In the meantime, it is hoped that the painters may be able to resume painting at St. Joseph's which may delay the re-opening of the church for private prayer but not the re-opening of the church for the public celebration of Mass.

Please see, on the Parish Website, **“A Message from the Metropolitan Archbishops of the Catholic Church in England and Wales”**.

A Coronavirus Prayer. “ Lord Jesus Christ, You travelled through towns and villages ‘ curing every disease and illness’. At Your command, the sick were made well. Come now to our aid, in the midst of this global pandemic, and send down Your blessing and healing upon us and protect our healthcare workers. Bring us through to Resurrection and a New Pentecost. For Thy Name's sake. Amen.

Unite against Coronavirus – Once again there is an urgent appeal that as many of us as possible sign the petition asking the UK Government to work with other world leaders to help the most vulnerable in our global family to cope with this crisis. (see the petition on cafod.org.uk/coronaviruscampaign). Our brothers and sisters in developing countries face the pandemic with fragile health systems with few, if any, ventilators and intensive care beds. Food prices have risen and the poorest have lost their jobs and income through wholesale lockdowns. Lack of access to washing facilities and limited ability to social distance will lead to loss of life on a massive scale. Please sign today if you have not already done so. Thank you. (Sandra)

Please remember in your prayers those in the parish who have died recently and whose funerals have been held privately due to coronavirus restrictions, Benetia Whittington (RIP), Gary Derrick (RIP), Mary Rees (RIP), Norma Hatherall (RIP), Nell O'Connell (RIP), Judith Jones (RIP). *Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord, And let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace Amen*

Congratulations to June Vaudin celebrating her 80th birthday in lockdown. Many happy returns of the day!

Parish Collections. **MANY THANKS** to all who have continued to donate to the Church over recent weeks through cash gifts, cheques, parish envelopes and standing orders with the bank. **WE ARE VERY GRATEFUL.** For those who have asked – for donations and Standing Orders – the details of our (St. Joseph's) bank account are – Branch Code 54-10-19 – Account Number 01520296 – (Diocese of Menevia Neath Parish) Nat West, 35 Green Street, Neath, SA11 1DB.

CORPUS CHRISTI – THE MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST - 14TH JUNE 2020

(St.John 6 v 51 – 56; 1 Corinthians 10 v 16 – 17; Deuteronomy 8 v 2-3, 14-16)

Today, Corpus Christi, the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, the Church gives thanks that the Risen, Ascended and Glorified Jesus, seated at the right hand of the Father, comes to us through the (outward) forms of bread and wine.

Though Jesus remains “locally present” in Heaven (until that Day when He shall return on the clouds of heaven), nevertheless, **through the Holy Spirit**, His Real Presence is “transmitted” to the heart of every believer (so that He abides in us, and we abide in Him), and especially (in a focused, intensified and objective manner) He comes to us, in the Eucharist, under the forms of bread and wine.

How is it possible for Jesus to remain “locally” in Heaven and yet visit the hearts and homes of all who believe in Him? Think of any event transmitted on radio or television, or through the internet – these are means/media/mediums for transmitting **one** local event to millions of receivers. We all experience and receive the one event through radio waves that transmit (mediate) the one event to us all. Although, no doubt, an inadequate and imperfect analogy, in a similar way, the vocation of the Holy Spirit is to transmit the Person of Jesus, and to apply the victories of His Precious Blood and Glorious Resurrection to all who are open to receive Him – who are “switched on” to receive Him. Or have we shut down the transmission, offended the Holy Spirit, abused the life of grace?

There are many ways in which the Holy Spirit “transmits” and applies the life of Jesus (the life of grace) to our souls.

In this Year of God’s Word/the Year of the God Who Speaks, we have been concentrating on how God speaks to us (and Jesus comes to us) through His Word. The Holy Scriptures are the **written** Word of God – Jesus is the **incarnate** Word of God, and they bear witness to each other (“and beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself” St.Luke 24 v 27). In this Year of God’s Word we are invited to sit (as Mary of Bethany sat at the feet of Jesus) and to hear God speaking to us through His Word.

Jesus also comes to us through the sacraments which are, in one sense, a continuation of the Incarnation. In the Incarnation, God affirms the material creation for He enfleshed Himself in His own Creation which, at the Beginning, He proclaimed to be “very good” (Genesis 1 v 21). In coming to us through the Waters of Baptism – (we do not have to wait until our first Holy Communion to receive Him! –we have already received Him in Baptism!) – through the Oils of the Sick, through Bread and Wine (in which we receive Him in a more profound way), our physicality/materiality is affirmed. Our faith is strengthened through a visible and material (outward) reception of the inward/invisible life of grace. The Resurrection of the Body affirms the material/physical Creation – as do the sacraments.

Jesus comes to us in other ways – through the poor (“ in as much as you did it to the least of these my brethren, you did it to me” St.Matthew 25 v 40). Jesus comes to us in our times of prayer, as we feed on Him by faith.

In all these ways the Holy Spirit “transmits” Jesus to our souls. Holy Mass, however, is the “summit” and “intensification” of the many ways in which Jesus comes to us, and is **inseparable** from the Sacrifice of the Mass upon which our Holy Communion with the Risen Jesus depends and by which it is effected and brought about. We feed upon the Lamb of God (under the form of Bread), remembering the words of Jesus, in our Gospel today, “the Bread that I shall give, is my Flesh for the life of the world” (St.John 6 v 51). The Sacrifice of the Mass, the Offering of the Body and Blood of Jesus, to take away our sins – (to bring that about in our own lives and the lives of those for whom we are praying) – is the centre and summit of the Mass (the summit of the summit!) upon which we then feed, affirming our participation in (as beneficiaries of) the New Covenant in the Blood of Jesus.

If, for whatever reason, someone is unable to receive the Sacrament, nevertheless, all Catholics are obliged to be present at the public Offering of the Sacrifice, for this is the “high point” of all prayer and all worship, instituted by God Himself, and no merely human institution (not even the coronation!) can match the celebration of Holy Mass, even when only two or three are gathered in a half ruined church in the deepest countryside. **That is what we are celebrating today!** – the institution, by God Himself, of the Sacrifice of the Mass which re-presents (and makes effective) the one **unrepeatable** Sacrifice of Calvary – to which we are all invited (to which we are all summoned from all our houses and homes) to offer together, to worship, praise, adore and to plead the Precious Blood of Jesus, “the Offering of the Body of Jesus Christ, once, for all” (Hebrews 10 v 16), “when Christ offered, for all time, a single sacrifice for sins” (v12), and to feed upon the Lamb (now Risen, Ascended and Glorified) under the forms of Bread and Wine.

“ To Him Who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honour and glory and power for ever and ever! And the four living creatures said ‘Amen!’, and the elders fell down and worshipped” (Revelation 5 v 13). O come let us worship!