

Homilies June 24th – July 2nd

Homily for Friday June 23 Birth of St John the Baptist

Today we are celebrating the birth of St. John the Baptist.

When St John the Baptist grew up he pointed to Jesus one day and said -

There is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

The Jewish people were used to sacrificing lambs for the forgiveness of sins. To anyone coming to Mass without an explanation of this the liturgical words in Mass about the Lamb of God may not make any sense.

Once we understand the animal sacrifice system of Jewish worship we understand that St. John the Baptist is saying this system of sacrificing a lamb is coming to an end because Jesus will be the sacrifice for all sins.

Let us thank our Lord as we take in all that St. John the Baptist was saying by calling him the Lamb of God.

Lord Jesus, you took on all the sins of the world so that there could be forgiveness in the world and in our lives. May our hearts be full of love for you. Amen.

Homily for Friday June 24 Feast of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

We celebrate with great joy the feast of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.

The feast today is well represented in our parish through the Sacred Heart of Jesus altar in our parish church.

Think of how many thousands of prayers have been said from the hearts of all of us before the Sacred Heart of Jesus statue in our Church.

Prayers for family and friends and for fellow parishioners, prayers for people we know and love and prayers for those we don't know but have heard of who are ill or going through difficulties and prayers for Ukraine and for first holy communion children and Confirmation young people. Prayers for those sitting exams and going to the hospital, prayers for those going to interviews and those sitting exams.

The list is endless. The loving heart of our Saviour hears all our prayers and we say in prayer to Him on this feast day -

O Sacred Heart of Jesus,
I place all my trust in You. Amen.

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Homily for Saturday June 25 Feast of Immaculate heart of Mary

Today's feast day of the Immaculate heart of Mary is entirely connected to yesterday's feast day of the most Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Our feast today says that we go with Mary to the heart of Jesus. We all travel to His most loving Heart together.

Today's feast day reassures us that we do not pray alone for Our Lady and the angels and saints are praying with us to the Heart of Jesus.

We are being reminded that we belong to a family. We have many family, friends and fellow parishioners who are praying for us and with us. We have all the nuns and monks in convents and monasteries praying for us too.

And we have the Immaculate heart of Mary the Mother of Jesus and our Mother to pray with us to the Heart of Jesus.

Homily for Sunday June 26

St. Paul tells us today what we have also heard from Jesus Himself that the whole of the Old Testament can be summed up in this way -

“Love your neighbour as yourself. “

We may be a long way off from carrying this teaching out but we must keep coming back to the central teaching of our faith.

This is telling us that if we are people of faith then it has a fruit that is displayed to others and the fruit is love for my neighbour and my neighbour is every other person in the world including my enemy.

There are people in the Church who love this way. There are the famous people who live this way like Sr. Helen the nun who is a chaplain on death row who literally loves those who have murdered other people and taken their lives. There are the Missionaries of Charity that actually pick up the dying and the unwashed in the streets of India to clean them and give them a bed to rest in. There are the Franciscan friars in Brazil who go out onto the streets to offer to shave the homeless men on the streets treating them as if they were paying customers in the barber shop.

When we contribute here to Arcaid and to Cafod and to the foodbank box at the back of the Church we are loving our neighbour as we love ourselves. It is important that we continue to do all of these things. It is important that we find new ways of loving our neighbour whether that neighbour is a sibling we find challenging or a person at work who is difficult with us or someone from a different political party and not from the one we support.

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We are not expected to do this loving of our neighbour by our own efforts or all by ourselves for everything in our faith is inspired by the grace of God without whom we can do no good world or kind act so that in fact the love we have and the love we do in action for our neighbour has its source in the grace of God.

Let us allow the grace of God to lead us on in the Christian way of living which is love of neighbour in the same way we love ourselves.

Homily for Monday June 27 feast day of St. Cyril of Alexandria

Today we celebrate the feast day of St. Cyril of Alexandria. Alexandria was the largest city in the ancient world made up of many different religious groups and political groups, a kind of Los Angeles of its time.

St Cyril defended the truth about who Mary was and who Christ was against those who were teaching different things.

We emulate his love for the truth and are reminded that Jesus says that He is the way, the TRUTH and the life. The Truth is God, the truth is God in Person, Jesus our Lord.

St Cyril defended the truth in the manner of his time which although certainly not in any way violent had a harshness about some of his decisions we would not want to be associated with in any way. For example, he expelled all Jewish people from Alexandria, which to us today is an appalling and sinful thing to do. Today we would oppose any behaviour like this that denied other human people the right to follow their own religion, especially our Jewish brothers and sisters from which our own religion emerged.

We cannot judge the behaviour of the past by the insights of today but we can clearly say that something in the past is evil or sinful because our insight now allows us to do so.

May we strive to live the truth of Christ's love for everyone.

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Homily for Tuesday June 28 Feast day of St Irenaeus

Today is the feast day of St Irenaeus born in Turkey and went to Lyons in France where he became the Bishop.

St. Irenaeus of Lyons says the life of a person is simply to be aware of God.

On this summer feast day let us not get lost in anything complicated.

Let us remain at this very basic level. Let us take in clearly these very important and simple words from St. Irenaeus - the purpose of life is to be aware of God.

Let us be aware of God right now.

Since God is defined as love in the New Testament we can know that the awareness of God is the awareness of His love for me and then my love for Him and then me sharing His love with others.

Today and everyday I will be aware of God.

Homily for Wednesday June 29

St Peter and St Paul, pope and missionary, formed the early Christians into small groups of Jesus followers.

The whole of their mission was for them and us to love Christ.

The message they preached, the gospel, the good news is good news precisely because it is a message of love for you and for me. Everyone is included. There is no sense that the love of the Lord is only for certain people but it is a personal love for every individual man, woman and child.

This is also the month of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus so let us see in our Sacred Heart Statue the image of the preaching undertaken by St Peter and St Paul. In this way we will have a visual call to the love of Christ just as when we hear St Peter and St Paul read in the Scriptures at Mass, we have an aural call to trust in the love of Christ for us.

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Homily for Thursday June 30

Today we remember the first martyrs of Rome who were martyred from 64 AD by having tar poured over them or thrown to the wild beasts as sport for the townspeople to watch.

Being killed for being a Christian started at the very beginning of the Church we know that this was a mission Saul was also involved in before he became St Paul after his conversion on the road to Damascus.

Let us today consider how easy it is to come to Church here in our part of the world and how easy in terms of persecution to be a Christian in our country today. There are challenges, of course, but there is so much freedom and so many things to be grateful for.

Let us also remember today to be grateful for martyrs who gave up their lives to speak for this very Christian faith we live out today.

We also with love in our hearts and with fervent prayers remember before the Lord all those who live in parts of the world where Christians are persecuted and there are so many places in the world where this persecution is a part of the daily faith experience of our brothers and sisters. May we be grateful for freedom to worship, may we pray for those who live in fear of reprisal, punishment and persecution.

Homily for Friday July 1 Feast of the Dedication of Arundel Cathedral

July is the month of the Most Precious Blood of Christ. Since the pandemic we have not been able to receive the Precious Blood of Christ from the Chalice as Communion has been distributed under one kind only.

It is important to remember that the Catholic teaching on the reception of the Lord's Body and Blood in Holy Communion is that Christ cannot be 'divided'. In other words when receive the Body or the Blood we receive Christ, full and entire. As we receive in these post-covid days only the Body of Christ we are still receiving the Body, the Blood, the Soul and the Divinity of Christ. This is not a diminished form of Holy Communion we are receiving.

Today is also the feast of the Dedication of Arundel Cathedral which became the Cathedral rather than a Parish Church of Arundel after the forming of the diocese of Arundel and Brighton in 1965. Let us remember the Cathedral mission in our prayers as we head towards the 150 year anniversary of the opening of the Cathedral building which is to offer the word of God and the Body and Blood of Christ to all who come through its doors.

**Homily for Saturday July 2
St. Oliver Plunkett**



Today we celebrate the feast of a former primate of all Ireland, St. Oliver Plunkett. He was living at a very tense time because of UK and Ireland politics and the relationship between the Protestants with Catholics at the last part of the 17th century.

He was arrested in Ireland, taken to London for trial and hanged at Tyburn.

Let us never return to those days of murdering people because of their faith. It may be so in other parts of the world still and for them we pray and even still in the waste in hate crimes but it is not, thankfully, sanctioned by the authorities anymore. It seems to take a long time of human history for humans to mature and develop. St. Oliver was the last person to be executed for the faith in our country.

He was known as a bishop in his great concern for his people and also for establishing friendly relations wherever he could with those who were not Catholics.

May we be concerned for all people around us and create good relationships with people who are not Catholics.