

SUMMER 2019

Welcome to our Summer 2019 newsletter – we hope you will find it of interest.

As we enter Ordinary Time we have two articles about this season in the Church's year – one on its importance and one on the Minister of the Word during Ordinary Time.

One of the great feasts we celebrate at this time is the Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul – secondary patrons of our Diocese - so we include a piece about that day and these two great saints.

We will also celebrate the Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady, a Holyday of Obligation, on 15 August. The National Catholic Register, a service of EWTN, has an article entitled '12 things to know and share' about the Assumption [here](#) which you might find helpful.

ORDINARY TIME

For some people entering into Ordinary Time, when the priests and deacons begin the seemingly long haul of wearing green vestments, it can feel as if we are entering into a rather bland period of 'nothing happening', there's nothing to enthuse us as Christmas, Easter and Pentecost might.

We could be forgiven for thinking that this is just an opportunity to breathe after all the excitement of major feasts. It might be seen as a time for resting before the next big event. However, there is much more to Ordinary Time. The word 'ordinary' suggests something which is not particularly special or important. 'Ordinary' comes from the Latin '*ordinalis*' which actually refers to numbers in a series. It is called 'ordinary' not because it is common but simply because the weeks of Ordinary Time are numbered.

Even though the season makes up most of the liturgical year in the Catholic Church, the fact that it refers to those periods that fall outside of the major liturgical seasons reinforces the impression that they are not very interesting. This is far from the case. In reality the numbered weeks of Ordinary Time represent what we might call the ordered life of the church – the period when we are neither fasting nor feasting, but living in watchfulness and expectation for the Second Coming of Christ. Ordinary time occurs twice in the year. The first is the period between Christmas and Lent, and then from Pentecost to the end of the Liturgical year just before Advent. The Gospel for the Second Sunday of Ordinary Time always features John the Baptist's acknowledgement of Christ as the Lamb, or Christ's first miracle – the transformation of water into wine at the wedding feast of Cana. In other words, for us Ordinary Time is a period of time when Christ walks among us, transforming our lives. Such transformation could never be termed 'ordinary'.

THE MINISTER OF THE WORD AND ORDINARY TIME

Understanding 'Ordinary Time' as a time when Christ walks with us encourages us to enter more deeply into the mystery of Christ in all its aspects. In this time, we can grow closer to the Lord and deepen our spiritual lives. The Sunday readings offer us an opportunity to engage with this spiritual journey by listening, reflecting and responding to the invitation each week. As a community (assembly) we have a responsibility to engage with the Word, to listen, to

hear and to respond to it with our lives. Knowing this to be the case, those of us who take on the ministry of reader (lector) have an onerous responsibility to ensure that how they proclaim the Word, does in fact allow those who listen, to hear not just physically, but spiritually. 'Reading' at Mass is not like reading a story to a child, though how we do that is important too. In proclaiming the word of God, the reader has a responsibility to mediate the presence of Christ to all who are present. God speaks to the gathered community through the readings.

It may seem strange, but a starting point for those of us who are Ministers of the Word, is an understanding of story. All of us hold stories within us. These are the tales of our life experiences, our fears, hopes, struggles, longings; all things which say something about our lives as individuals and as families. Some of our stories we remember vividly and some we choose to forget. However, we deal with them, they remain a part of who we are and how we relate to the world around us. The world which we inhabit also has stories – cultural, ethnic and social – all of which serve to provide us with a backdrop to our own story. These bigger stories can help us to feel anchored and tell us that we belong to something bigger, something beyond ourselves. These stories help us to deal with the highs and lows of life as we see our own story echoed and reflected in the lives of others. Forgetting our story can cause us to lose our way.

The stories contained within the scriptures which we hear each week in church, give us a view of reality that rises above the cultural trends which dominate our lives. Each week they help us to refocus on what is important. The great stories of our tradition remind us that God has always been with us and continues to be involved in our lives through the incarnation and humanity of Jesus. These stories of our faith are essential to our formation and growth as Christians, both personally and communally. Each time we hear them we are reminded of God's infinite love, ever present and ever active in our struggling world. Through the experience we are encouraged and renewed as people of faith for the week ahead.

EATING OUR WORDS

Given the centrality of these stories to our life of faith, how the assembly hears and appropriates them is crucial. When we switch off in the belief that they are irrelevant or become passive, we are at risk of forgetting, at a profound level, who we are and where we come from. This is why those of us who proclaim the scriptures need to know how significant they are so that we can share our passion and understanding with those who are listening. This does not come simply by having a loud, clear voice or a working sound system. It requires the lector to spend time in prayer, reflecting on the readings, so that the words we read become our own. Knowing the readings thoroughly will allow the lector a better chance of looking at the assembly, and through this drawing them deeper into the story being told.

When the Lord speaks to Ezekiel (2:7-10) we are given a true insight into what it is we need to remember in our ministry of Lector:

"You shall speak my words to (the people of Israel), whether they hear or refuse to hear; for they are a rebellious house. But you, mortal, hear what I say to you; do not be rebellious like that rebellious house; open your mouth and eat what I give you. I looked, and a hand was stretched out to me, and a written scroll was in it. He spread it before me; it had writing on the front and on the back, and written on it were words of lamentation and mourning and woe."

In short – those of us who take on this important ministry – must be prepared to ‘eat’ the words we are to read, if we are to minister with integrity in our proclamation of the Word. Understanding this will help us not to dismiss Ordinary Time, but see it as a real opportunity to ensure that every member of the community can grow more deeply and profoundly in their relationship with Christ.

SAINTS PETER AND PAUL

Saints Peter and Paul are Secondary Patrons of the Diocese of Clifton and their feast day is celebrated on 29 June. This Solemnity is a Holyday of Obligation in most countries, including England, Wales, and Scotland, but not in Ireland. In Great Britain when the celebration falls on either a Saturday or a Monday it is transferred to the Sunday.

This is a major holiday in Rome, with schools, shops and banks closed. The day is filled with both religious and secular celebrations. A particular highlight of the day is the special adorning the bronze statue of St. Peter: the statue is clothed with an amice, alb, tiara, stole, red cope and a ring so that it almost seems to come to life. Fine marble, Sicilian jasper, green porphyry and the “marble of St. Peter” decorate the pedestal.

Many people wonder though: why do Peter and Paul share a feast day? Why does it seem as though they are in competition with each other? Other apostles share feast days, such as Philip and James the Lesser on 3 May and Simon and Jude on 28 October. But one might think that the first Pope would have his own feast day. Why Peter and Paul on the same day?

In addition to sharing the main feast day, the current Liturgical Calendar, revised in 1969, has an even number of feasts for Saints Peter and Paul. For Peter there is the Solemnity on 29 June, then the Chair of St. Peter on 22 February. St. Paul is celebrated on 29 June and 25 January for the Conversion of St. Paul. On 18 November, there is an Optional Memorial for the Dedication of the Basilicas of Peter and Paul, again, sharing the same day.

Before the revision of the calendar, there were several other feasts, but anytime there was a feast of St. Peter, there would be a commemoration of St. Paul on that day, and vice versa. Neither Saint would be excluded.

All this brings to mind St. Paul’s words to the Corinthians, that from the very beginning there were tensions among the faithful, about choosing either Peter or Paul:

I appeal to you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree and that there be no dissensions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. For it has been reported to me by Chloe’s people that there is quarrelling among you, my brethren. What I mean is that each one of you says, “I belong to Paul,” or “I belong to Apollos,” or “I belong to Cephas,” or “I belong to Christ.” Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I am thankful that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius; lest any one should say that you were baptized in my name. For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God (1 Cor 1:10-18).

Of course our Liturgical Calendar isn’t reflecting a compromise to ease a division between two saints. The simplest and most enduring explanation for the shared feast is that tradition (with

a small “t”) shows that St. Peter and St. Paul were each martyred by Emperor Nero on the same day in two different places around Rome. St. Peter was crucified upside down in Rome, and St. Paul was beheaded outside the walls of Rome (where each basilica is located).

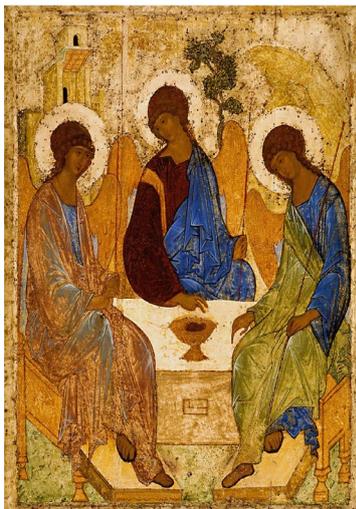
And the focus of celebration of this day is to find the common ground between these saints, as St. Leo the Great points out:

There must be general rejoicing, dearly beloved, over this holy company whom God has appointed for our example in patience and for our confirmation in faith. But we must glory even more in the excellence of their fathers, Peter and Paul, whom the grace of God has raised to such a height among all the members of the Church that He has set them like twin lights of eyes in that Body whose head is Christ.

About their merits and virtues, which surpass all power of telling, let us not make distinctions or draw comparisons; for both were chosen, they were alike in their labours, they were partners in death. But, drawing upon our own experience and upon the teaching of our forefathers, we believe and are sure that in the troubles in this life we must ask to be helped by the prayers of our special heavenly patrons in obtains God’s mercy; for as we are weighed down by our own sins, so are we raised up by the Apostles’ merits. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom together with the Father and the Holy Ghost is equal power and identical Divinity, for ever and ever. Amen. (Sermon of Leo the Great, P.L. 54, Sermo 82).

Today we honour together in martyrdom these two great saints, Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles and Peter, Supreme Pontiff and first Bishop of Rome. We recognise the similarity of the “same large heart overflowing with love for mankind, the same naturally impulsive disposition; there is the same energy and self-forgetfulness, the same burning zeal for the good of all men, the same joy in suffering for Christ” (*Feasts of Mother Church* by Mother Mary Salome).

Understanding and Praying the Liturgy



We are now over half-way through our Liturgy Course, which is proving to be very popular and we are grateful to our speakers and participants for their continued support. We ask that you continue to support them, too, with your prayers. This particular course is taking place in our cathedral and we will soon be looking at how it may be developed and taken to other parts of the diocese.

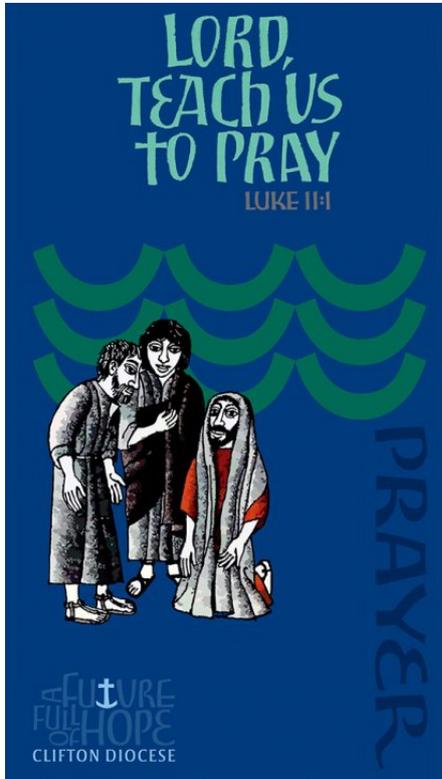
Music Day

Our postponed Music Day will be held on 9 November at the Church of St John the Evangelist, Bath, where there is parking available and the church is within easy reach of both the bus and train stations. Further information about the day will be published as soon as it is finalised.

Coming Up

Please note in your diaries the following Diocesan Events which are coming up next month:

6 July – Diocesan Day



This will be held at St Brendan's College, Brislington, beginning at 9.45am and ending with the closing Mass at 4.15pm. Our keynote speaker is Fr Denis McBride and there will be a number of different workshops, for young and old alike, reflecting our Diocesan Year of Prayer. Lunch will be provided so, if you would like to come along please email

adult.education@cliftondiocese.com by **28 June**.

13 July – Marriage Mass

This will be held at our cathedral with Bishop Declan at 12 noon, followed by refreshments on the terrace.

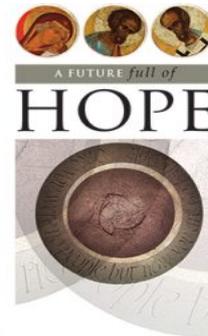


14 July – Diocesan Pilgrimage to Glastonbury

GLASTONBURY PILGRIMAGE



OUR LADY OF GLASTONBURY



2019 Programme

ST MARY'S CHURCH

11.30am Rosary
12noon Exposition and Adoration
3.00pm Benediction

12noon - 3.00pm
GLASTONBURY ABBEY
Sacrament of Reconciliation
and Healing Prayer

2.15pm
ROSARY PROCESSION
from the Abbey grounds

3.30pm
MASS in the Abbey
grounds celebrated by
Bishop Declan Lang

for more information:
glastonburyshrine.co.uk

A FUTURE
FULL OF
HOPE
CLIFTON DIOCESE

The Liturgy Office is happy to provide liturgical ministry formation to deaneries or clusters of parishes on request – so do let us know what your needs are. Please, too, look at our section of the website on a regular basis as it includes a number of resources to help us in our liturgical celebration, including suggested Bidding Prayers (Prayer of the Faithful) for each Sunday and Holyday of the year.

GDPR

Finally, we would like to create a database of those who are interested in being Liturgy contacts or simply receiving details of what's coming up. If you would like your name to be included please do let us know by emailing liturgy@cliftondiocese.com and, if you are happy to be a liturgy contact, please also give details of your parish or community.

Any information provided will be processed in accordance with the Diocese's Privacy Notice which is available at <https://cliftondiocese.com/privacy-notice>