

I am sorry, there is no newsletter this weekend. Instead a few thoughts:

Every day, (sometimes the evening before) as I prepare to celebrate mass, to concentrate my thoughts and focus my mind on prayer, I look at three things; the Collect of the Day; the Preface I intend to employ by way of introduction to the Eucharistic Prayer; and, if there is one, the life of the saint(s) to be commemorated that day. In addition, I would generally look to the Office of Readings.

Corpus Christi

is one of the great of our year which brings into perspective God's great love for each and every one of us and how marvellous the gift of His Son was and is.

In today's Collect we will pray:

O God, who in this wonderful Sacrament has left us a memorial of your Passion, grant us, we pray, so to revere the sacred mysteries of your Body and Blood that we may always experience in ourselves the fruits of your redemption.

And, in the Preface we will pray:

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord.

For at the Last Supper with his Apostles, establishing for the ages to come the saving memorial of the Cross, he offered himself to you as the unblemished Lamb, the acceptable gift of perfect praise.

Nourishing your faithful by this sacred mystery, you make them holy, so that the human race, bounded by one world, may be enlightened by one faith and united by one bond of charity.

And so, we approach the table of this wondrous Sacrament, so that, bathed in the sweetness of your grace, we may pass over to the heavenly realities here foreshadowed.

Therefore, all creatures of heaven and earth sing a new song in adoration, and we, with all the host of Angels, cry out, and without end we acclaim: Holy, holy, holy ...

On this feast, in the Office of Readings, the author of the Second Reading is **St Thomas Aquinas**.

He was born (1225) of a noble family in southern Italy, and was educated by the Benedictines. In the normal course of events he would have joined that order and taken up a position suitable to his rank; but he decided to become a Dominican friar instead.

He studied in Paris and in Cologne under the great philosopher St Albert the Great, at a time of great philosophical ferment, when the writings of Aristotle, the greatest philosopher of the ancient world, had been newly rediscovered and were becoming available to people in the West for the first time in a thousand years. Many feared that Aristotelianism was flatly contradictory to Christianity, and the fact that Aristotle's works were coming to the West from mostly Muslim sources did nothing to help matters.

Thomas' clarity of thought ensured that the truth would be recognised whatever its source. He inaugurated a form of disputation which would bring ideas together not so that one would win and the other lose through clever tricks of debate, but so that the single unifying truth behind them should be found. He thus not only transformed the practice of theology but also laid the foundations of the modern scientific revolution.

As well as producing major philosophical and theological works, Thomas, at the request of Pope Urban IV, composed the Divine Office (of which the Office of Readings is part) for the newly-created feast of Corpus Christi.

Church Reopening for Private Prayer:

We are as ready as we possibly could have been.

Unfortunately, the Government did not issue the final guidelines until yesterday (Friday) lunchtime and we did not receive them until later in the afternoon. In fact, we are still trying to come to terms with them.

I was asked to publish the following this weekend and I am happy to do so BUT ...

Thank you to those many people who have come forward to help, Joe Harvey at MB, Pat Atkinson at NM and Deacon Don are co-ordinating things in the churches -please contact them if you wish to help further

As it is, we are still awaiting guidance documents, and authorisation applications from the Diocese, and once received they will have to be completed, and returned to the Diocese for the Bishop's authorisation so, we don't expect to be opened next week, as soon as we know further it will be announced....

We have made lots of plans and preparations, so any delay will not be from the Parish.

And the BUT...

All volunteers **MUST** be under 70 years of age and **MUST NOT** come from a household where a member of the family is Shielding. We have problems with the type, size and construction of required signage and tapes.

So YES ..

We are still looking for volunteers, preferably marathon runners with no grey hair and, as soon as we can fully comply with the requirements of government we will open our churches but it will not be for some time yet. There is a small team of parishioners working to open our churches at the earliest opportunity and, as soon as we can do so, everybody will be notified by either email or telephone message and the Website will be updated accordingly.

I am aware that many parishes will not be able to open even for private but I hope and pray that we will not part of this unhappy band.

In the meantime ...

Groups of six in the open air ...

(Oh for the sunshine of last month!)

I have been approached with a view to establishing times for group prayer, praying the Rosary, both at the Grotto in New Mills and before Our Lady's statue here in the garden at Chapel. Until yesterday, my main concern was trying to avoid times which would clash with any church opening but that problem, at least in the short term, has disappeared.

During the course of next week, I will try to publish times and locations when people might come together in groups of up to six to pray the Rosary.

If you decide to join one of the groups please remember that the group is limited to just six and that any others must pray some distance away from the socially distancing group. Watch your inbox.

And Finally

Just to keep you up to date Whilst I am still classed as Vulnerable, I am no longer Shielding ... and so have started doing things that normal people take for granted.

For the first time in twelve weeks, I went shopping this week. Most of you will not recognise the joy of being able to choose a magazine and selecting a packet of Eccles Cakes from the shelf. Oh Joy; Oh rapture!

Whilst Fr. Daniel and Fr. Martin will continue to field most calls within the parishes, I am increasingly available bones and muscles permitting.

Thank you for all your prayers and, please, continue to pray for all the sick and housebound, those shielding, their families and those who volunteer to help meet their many needs.

May God bless you all,

Fr. Kevin