

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY ANN** We send very special birthday wishes to Ann Rigby who will be 90 on Friday. Ann has done so much for the parish over the years and we really do appreciate all her hard work. Although we are not able to celebrate together just yet, we wish her a lovely day and heartfelt thanks from us all.

**INGOL FOOD BANK – SHARE IT PROJECT** Sr Eileen, who runs the ‘Share It’ project in Ingol was so pleased and grateful for all your generous contributions that you donated during the Lent and Easter season. Your support really does help to make a difference to all those families who are struggling to make ends meet and she sends grateful thanks to you all. We will have a break over the Summer period but will collect again for the Food bank in Autumn.

**PHONE AVAILABLE** Gigaset c630a cordless phone from the presbytery, now surplus to requirements. Only 5 months old, in good condition other than a slight scuff on the screen. Features: original box, 200 phonebook entries, answering machine 30 mins record time, nuisance call blocker, hands free speakerphone and up to 14 hours talk time between charging. Available for a small donation to church. Contact [admin@stfrancisgoosnargh.org.uk](mailto:admin@stfrancisgoosnargh.org.uk)

**PARISHIONERS WHO ARE UNWELL** If you would like the parish to pray for someone who is currently unwell, please email [news@stfrancisgoosnargh.org.uk](mailto:news@stfrancisgoosnargh.org.uk) or ring Father Sony on 01772 865229. It will be then be included in the newsletter. We have an area in church where you can write a prayer intention on a card and hang it up if you prefer it not to go on the parish newsletter.

**CHURCH DONATIONS** With many people still unable to attend church we still need to maintain an income for maintenance. There are several ways you can still make your contributions including by cheque or direct debit. For details please go to the church website or contact Tom Smyth on 017722 865689.

### Attendance and Collection

Sunday 18 April – 37: £132.00

### Cycle of Prayer During Easter

We pray for: New members of the church;; Right use of the media on Communications Day (16 May); The Church, especially at Pentecost (23 May).

**Feast Days this Week:** Monday – Sts Philip & James; Tuesday – English Martyrs.

**Letter and Prayers from Pope Francis:** Pope Francis is asking for people to say the rosary in the month of May to bring an end to the pandemic. A letter giving further details and special prayers is available at the back of church.



## St Francis Hill Chapel Parish Newsletter

The Hill, Horns Lane

Goosnargh, Preston PR3 2FJ

Telephone: 01772 865229

Clergy: Father Sony Joseph Kadamthodu

[www.stfrancisgoosnargh.org.uk](http://www.stfrancisgoosnargh.org.uk)

Email (for newsletter items only):

[news@stfrancisgoosnargh.org.uk](mailto:news@stfrancisgoosnargh.org.uk)

**In case of emergency (and unable to contact Father Sony) please ring  
Father Dutton on 01772 782641 or Canon Doyle on 01772 782244**

## FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

**2 May 2021 (Readings: Year B)**

### *Parish Mission Statement*

*Our Parish, guided by the example of our patron St Francis of Assisi, seeks to be a welcoming Catholic Community, by living, sharing and growing in faith. We strive to deepen our own relationship with Christ and meet the needs of others.*

Mass today is for the people of the parish.

Please pray for all those whose anniversaries occur about this time, especially Michael D'Arcy, Dorothy Walton, Mary Josephine Wood and Willian Raymond Shorrock.

Church is now open again for Sunday mass at 10.30am. **Please only attend mass if you feel safe to do so. The dispensation for Sunday mass is still in place.**

**Daily Mass** live at 9.30am from St Clare's in Preston can be accessed on their YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/user/StClaresChurch/>

## SAFETY RULES FOR MASS

Stewards will be on duty to ensure that safety procedures are followed. Full details are on our website. Please do read them. **Face masks will need to be worn** as specified by the government.

### **Please follow these guidelines once entering church:**

- \* **Sanitise hands** on entry.
- \* Please do **keep your distance** – use the high visibility tape on floor as a guide.
- \* Place your collection on the collection plate **as you enter**.
- \* Please take a mass sheet & newsletter on entry and **take them away when you leave**.

\* At Holy Communion (given in silence):

**Please wear a mask** as you go up the aisle to communion and remove their mask before they receive the sacrament.

**People from upstairs** will go first down the right-hand side and return down the opposite aisle to maintain social distancing.

**People on the right-hand side** will then receive Holy Communion, followed by people on the left-hand side – guided by the stewards.

## BIDDING PRAYERS

**Loving Lord, in today's gospel your son Jesus invites us to follow you. We come to you offering our hearts and our lives. Take them, Lord, and use them as your own.**

We pray for Pope Francis and all bishops. May they continue to care for the Church with love, sensitivity and compassion so that many people will find safety and hope. **Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

We pray for all those in governmental roles as we look towards the oncoming local and mayoral elections. May candidates and their teams work for the good of the people they are called to serve. **Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

We pray for all those who are suffering around the world, particularly the people of India who are really struggling to cope with the impact of Covid 19. May people receive the support they need to survive and may all those many people who have died rest in peace. **Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

**We give thanks for your never-ending presence in our lives. May your love and compassion be constantly with us as we face the week ahead, through Christ our Lord, Amen.**

## FROM THE ARCHIVES

On Monday 3 May, we celebrate 'May Day' which is officially known in the UK as the Early May Bank Holiday. It is usually held on the first Monday of May each year but in 2020, it was transferred to Friday 8 May, as part of the 75th anniversary of the VE Day commemorations. May Day has been an official public holiday since 1978 but it has been celebrated since ancient times and was, and often still is to a certain extent, a time of fun and festivities in many locations across the nation. The day would be marked with village folk cavorting round the maypole, the selection of the May Queen and the dancing figure of the Jack-in-the-Green at the head of the procession. Jack is thought to be a relic from the days when our ancient ancestors worshipped trees. Traces of Jack-in-the-Green can still be found on the signs of pubs across the country called the 'Green Man'. These pagan roots did little to endear May Day festivities with the either the Church or State. In the sixteenth century riots followed when May Day celebrations were banned. Fourteen rioters were hanged, and Henry VIII is said to have pardoned a further 400 who had been sentenced to death. Dancing did not return to the village greens until the reign of Charles II, 'The Merry Monarch', who helped ensure the support of his subjects with the erection of a massive 40-metre-high maypole in London's Strand. This pole signalled the return of the fun times and remained standing for almost fifty years.

For Christians, the tradition of dedicating the month of May to Our Lady is centuries old, dating back at least 700 years. Pope Paul VI wrote an encyclical on the month of May, focusing on the Virgin Mary. He wrote that, *'The piety of the faithful has long dedicated the month of May to the Mother of God. We are delighted and consoled by this pious custom associated with the month of May, which pays honour to the Blessed Virgin and brings such rich benefits to Christian people. Since Mary is rightly to be regarded as the way by which we are led to Christ, the person who encounters Mary cannot help but encounter Christ likewise'*.

St John Henry Newman, in his book *Meditations and Devotions*, offers various reasons why May in particular is dedicated to Our Lady. He states: *'The first reason is because it is the time when the earth bursts forth into its fresh foliage and its green grass after the stern frost and snow of winter and the raw atmosphere and the wild wind and rain of the early spring. It is because the blossoms are upon the trees and the flowers are in the gardens. It is because the days have got long, and the sun rises early and sets late. For such gladness and joyousness of external Nature is a fit attendant on our devotion to her who is the Mystical Rose and the House of Gold'*. Newman admits that sometimes May is a rainy, cool month. However, it always remains, *'a month of promise and hope, the prelude to summer, the season of light. It is in this sense that it represents Mary. She reflects the light of Christ'*.

In this area we are blessed with much beautiful countryside. During this special month of May the trees are fresh and green, the fields lush with new pasture and the woods are covered in the most glorious carpet of bluebells. **Mike Bryan**

## First reading

Acts 9:26-31

*Barnabas explained how the Lord had appeared to Saul on his journey*

When Saul got to Jerusalem he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him: they could not believe he was really a disciple. Barnabas, however, took charge of him, introduced him to the apostles, and explained how the Lord had appeared to Saul and spoken to him on his journey, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. Saul now started to go round with them in Jerusalem, preaching fearlessly in the name of the Lord. But after he had spoken to the Hellenists, and argued with them, they became determined to kill him. When the brothers knew, they took him to Caesarea, and sent him off from there to Tarsus.

The churches throughout Judaea, Galilee and Samaria were now left in peace, building themselves up, living in the fear of the Lord, and filled with the consolation of the Holy Spirit.

---

## Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 21(22):26-28,30-32

---

## Second reading

1 John 3:18-24

*The commandment of faith and love*

My children, our love is not to be just words or mere talk, but something real and active; only by this can we be certain that we are children of the truth and be able to quieten our conscience in his presence, whatever accusations it may raise against us, because God is greater than our conscience and he knows everything. My dear people, if we cannot be condemned by our own conscience, we need not be afraid in God's presence, and whatever we ask him, we shall receive, because we keep his commandments and live the kind of life that he wants.

His commandments are these: that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and that we love one another as he told us to. Whoever keeps his commandments lives in God and God lives in him. We know that he lives in us by the Spirit that he has given us.

---

## Gospel Acclamation

Jn15:4,5

Alleluia, alleluia!

Make your home in me, as I make mine in you.

Whoever remains in me bears fruit in plenty.

Alleluia!

---

## Gospel

John 15:1-8

*I am the vine, you are the branches*

Jesus said to his disciples: 'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that bears no fruit he cuts away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes to make it bear even more. You are pruned already, by means of the word that I have spoken to you. Make your home in me, as I make mine in you. As a branch cannot bear fruit all by itself, but must remain part of the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me, with me in him, bears fruit in plenty; for cut off from me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in me is like a branch that has been thrown away – he withers; these branches are collected and thrown on the fire, and they are burnt. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask what you will and you shall get it. It is to the glory of my Father that you should bear much fruit, and then you will be my disciples.'

## HOMILY

Acts 9:26-31; 1John 3:18-24; John 15: 1-8

What do I know about horticulture? Nothing. What do I know about viticulture (the care of vines)? Less than nothing. Where are we going with today's Gospel? Let's dive in and find out.

I have to confess that, unless it had bunches of grapes hanging from it, I wouldn't recognise a vine if it poked me in the eye. In one of my previous parishes, one of the tabernacle covers carried a depiction of vine leaves. To be honest, I thought they were ivy. On the other hand, I am just about capable of recognising a rose bush, so I will start from there.

The first question which strikes me is "What is the difference between cutting away and pruning?" Would it be fair to say that they are the two sides of the same coin? The dead branches, and those which are not going to flourish further, are cut away, which amounts to a pruning of the whole bush.

When this pruning has been done, what is left? Precious little, it seems to me: not much more than a stump. Yet apparently this has to be done if the bush is to retain its value, to continue to fulfil its purpose. As long as there is

something arising from the main stem, there is hope of life: yet it seems to be a fairly brutal business.

Our Lord's description of viticulture is equally brutal. The unfruitful branches are lopped off, whereupon they wither, after which they go on the bonfire. Seemingly, they don't even have a future as compost.

How does this apply to us—to us as individuals, and to us as the Church? The message seems, at one level, very straightforward. If we remain rooted in Christ, we will bear fruit, and all will be well. If, on the other hand, we do not allow Christ to bear fruit through us, to run through us like sap through the branches, we have no future.

So far, so good: but where does the pruning come in? Is there any one of you who has not been through pain and loss? Is there anyone who has not had to give up something precious, something without which you felt, at the time, that you could not survive? Bereavement is the most obvious example, but there are other things such as the breakdown of a relationship, the loss of a job, the failure of a project, or a collapse in health.

Have these losses destroyed you, as you felt they were doing at the time, or have you come through them leaner, fitter, more positive, more determined, perhaps with an enhanced gift of compassion, and a renewed sense of your need of God, and of union with Jesus Christ, that same God who, you initially thought, had abandoned you? I cannot answer that question for you, but it is worth pondering: have the prunings which you have undergone made you stronger or weaker, better or worse?

And what about the Church? She is going through a very drastic process of pruning at present. So much rottenness has been found among the branches in terms of abuse by clergy, and the cutting away of branches still has a way to go. You won't be surprised to find me adding the rottenness of cowardly bishops and religious superiors, who are happy to sacrifice innocent priests and monks in order to cover their own backs, a rottenness which the institution is still unwilling to admit.

There is still more. The sin of clericalism, to which Pope Francis repeatedly draws attention—the sense of superiority and of entitlement to lord it over others—is still rampant. The present Holy Father is a gift from God to the Church, initiating a process of root and branch reform, but he is meeting bitter, and literally diabolic opposition, principally in the United States, where the majority of Catholics remain faithful, but where a minority, including some bishops and priests, appear to believe that their allegiance is to be given to Donald Trump, rather than to Jesus Christ.

There is an ancient adage, *ecclesia semper reformanda*, (the Church always in need of reform), and what is true of the Church is equally true of us as

individuals. We constantly need the vinedresser to be at work, pruning us, cutting us back, enabling us to bear more fruit for Christ.

### ***Letter of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Faithful for the Month of May 2020***

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The month of May is approaching, a time when the People of God express with particular intensity their love and devotion for the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is traditional in this month to pray the Rosary at home within the family. The restrictions of the pandemic have made us come to appreciate all the more this “family” aspect, also from a spiritual point of view.

For this reason, I want to encourage everyone to rediscover the beauty of praying the Rosary at home in the month of May. This can be done either as a group or individually; you can decide according to your own situations, making the most of both opportunities. The key to doing this is always simplicity, and it is easy also on the internet to find good models of prayers to follow.

I am also providing two prayers to Our Lady that you can recite at the end of the Rosary, and that I myself will pray in the month of May, in spiritual union with all of you. I include them with this letter so that they are available to everyone.

Dear brothers and sisters, contemplating the face of Christ with the heart of Mary our Mother will make us even more united as a spiritual family and will help us overcome this time of trial. I keep all of you in my prayers, especially those suffering most greatly, and I ask you, please, to pray for me. I thank you, and with great affection I send you my blessing.

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 25 April 2020  
Feast of Saint Mark the Evangelist

## **FIRST PRAYER**

O Mary,  
You shine continuously on our journey  
as a sign of salvation and hope.  
We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick,  
who, at the foot of the cross,  
were united with Jesus' suffering,  
and persevered in your faith.  
“Protectress of the Roman people”,  
you know our needs,  
and we know that you will provide,  
so that, as at Cana in Galilee,  
joy and celebration may return  
after this time of trial.  
Help us, Mother of Divine Love,  
to conform ourselves to the will of the Father  
and to do what Jesus tells us.  
For he took upon himself our suffering,  
and burdened himself with our sorrows  
to bring us, through the cross,  
to the joy of the Resurrection.  
Amen.  
We fly to your protection,  
O Holy Mother of God;  
Do not despise our petitions  
in our necessities,  
but deliver us always  
from every danger,  
O Glorious and Blessed Virgin.

## **SECOND PRAYER**

“We fly to your protection, O Holy Mother of God”.  
In the present tragic situation, when the whole world is prey to suffering and anxiety, we fly to you, Mother of God and our Mother, and seek refuge under your protection.  
Virgin Mary, turn your merciful eyes towards us amid this coronavirus pandemic. Comfort those who are distraught and mourn their loved ones who have died, and at times are buried in a way that grieves them deeply. Be close to those who are concerned for their loved ones who are sick and who,

in order to prevent the spread of the disease, cannot be close to them. Fill with hope those who are troubled by the uncertainty of the future and the consequences for the economy and employment.

Mother of God and our Mother, pray for us to God, the Father of mercies, that this great suffering may end and that hope and peace may dawn anew. Plead with your divine Son, as you did at Cana, so that the families of the sick and the victims be comforted, and their hearts be opened to confidence and trust.

Protect those doctors, nurses, health workers and volunteers who are on the frontline of this emergency, and are risking their lives to save others. Support their heroic effort and grant them strength, generosity and continued health.

Be close to those who assist the sick night and day, and to priests who, in their pastoral concern and fidelity to the Gospel, are trying to help and support everyone.

Blessed Virgin, illumine the minds of men and women engaged in scientific research, that they may find effective solutions to overcome this virus.

Support national leaders, that with wisdom, solicitude and generosity they may come to the aid of those lacking the basic necessities of life and may devise social and economic solutions inspired by farsightedness and solidarity.

Mary Most Holy, stir our consciences, so that the enormous funds invested in developing and stockpiling arms will instead be spent on promoting effective research on how to prevent similar tragedies from occurring in the future.

Beloved Mother, help us realize that we are all members of one great family and to recognize the bond that unites us, so that, in a spirit of fraternity and solidarity, we can help to alleviate countless situations of poverty and need. Make us strong in faith, persevering in service, constant in prayer.

Mary, Consolation of the afflicted, embrace all your children in distress and pray that God will stretch out his all-powerful hand and free us from this terrible pandemic, so that life can serenely resume its normal course.

To you, who shine on our journey as a sign of salvation and hope, do we entrust ourselves, O Clement, O Loving, O Sweet Virgin Mary. Amen.