

# THE PARISHES OF ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST AND ST MARY MAGDALENE

35 Brighton Place, Edinburgh EH15 1LL

Parish Priest: Fr. Jock Dalrymple:

Deacon – Revd Eddie White:

Bingham Avenue, Edinburgh EH15 3HY

0131 669 5447

07986 015772

*Pastoral Team: Alice Codling, Jennifer Morris and Chris Vinestock*

*Shared Parish House: 3 Sandford Gardens, EH15 1LP*

*Administrator: Enrico Fertini*

*(Office Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday: 10am to 3pm & Friday 11am-4pm)*

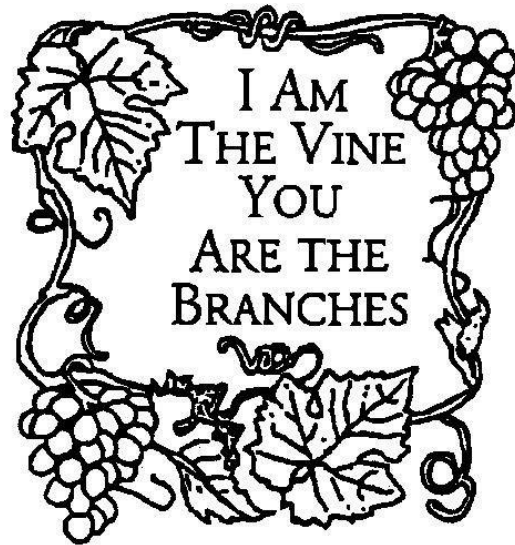
Web address: [www.stjohnsportobello.co.uk](http://www.stjohnsportobello.co.uk)

Web address: [www.stmarymagdalenes.co.uk](http://www.stmarymagdalenes.co.uk)

Joint Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/StJohnsandStMaryMagdalenes>

Joint e-mail address for our sister parishes: [stjohnsandstmarymagdalenes@gmail.com](mailto:stjohnsandstmarymagdalenes@gmail.com)

## *Fifth Sunday of Easter – 2 May 2021*

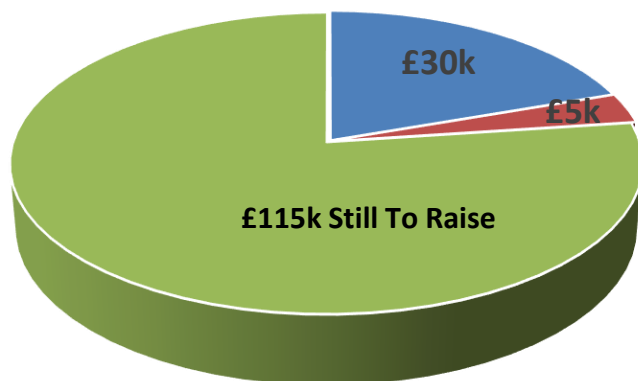


*John 15:5*

**This week, there is the monthly special collection for the St John's Tower Fund.**

### **St John's Tower Repair Fundraising progress as at 27 April 2021**

Gary Zoltie, Chair of St John's Finance Council writes:



‘Thank you very much for the continuing donations you have made for the Tower Fund. We have received a further £1,513 since last month. A reminder that the total project cost is £352,000 and we have £202,000 already in the bank so we have a **target to raise £150,000**.

In the first six months since we launched the project, we have made a wonderful start as the Christmas raffle made **£4,771** after costs and we have now received donations totalling **£29,550**.

Whilst we have secured a loan from the Archdiocese for the full £150,000, all funds raised will reduce the amount that we will need to borrow. **This weekend brings another second collection for the Tower Fund** and you can still donate by placing cash in an envelope and dropping off at the Parish house or by bank transfer to sort code 80-46-53, account number 10765768, account name St Johns Church. In both cases, please mark as “Tower Fund”. Thank you again.’

Warm 30<sup>th</sup> Birthday Greetings to L'Arche, Edinburgh – founded on 3 May 1991.

## BOOKING PLACES AT MASS



To help us to manage the numbers, if you wish to come to one of the 'live' Saturday and Sunday Masses, please contact the parish house **by phone (0131 669 5618 – a special number)** or by email ([stjohnsandstmarymagdalenes@gmail.com](mailto:stjohnsandstmarymagdalenes@gmail.com)) **on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday (10am to 1pm) until Friday 1pm.** After every Mass in one of our Churches, 'deep cleaning' has to take place – something that takes a considerable length of time and effort. We are so incredibly grateful to our welcomers, stewards and cleaners who are making it possible for us to have our churches open – **and always open to new volunteers.**) Please also be aware that you will need to utilize hand sanitisers as you come into and leave the church, and masks must be worn throughout the service.

Due to the COVID regulations we have limited seatings available and therefore we advise early booking.

## RICHARD ROHR – MAKING FRIENDS

I've known an Evangelical pastor, Brian McLaren, for many years; and I deeply admire his gift for making friends through his genuine curiosity, compassion, and unconditional presence to others. In this passage, he encourages us to build relationships outside our comfortable social and religious groups:

*Christian mission begins with friendship—not utilitarian friendship, the religious version of network marketing—but genuine friendship, friendship that translates love for neighbours in general into knowing, appreciating, liking, and enjoying this or that neighbour in particular. . . .*

*Many new friends have come into my life . . . Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, New Agers, and others—including lots of atheists and agnostics, too. One of the most dramatic of those friendships began in the aftermath of 9/11/2001. Like a lot of churches, our little congregation held a prayer service. While praying, I felt a voice speaking, as it were, in my chest: Your Muslim neighbours are in danger of reprisals. You must try to protect them. The next morning, I wrote and made copies of a letter extending, belatedly, friendship toward Muslim communities in my area, and offering solidarity and help if simmering anti-Muslim sentiments should be translated into action. I drove to the three mosques nearby - I had never visited them before - and tried to deliver my letter in person. . . .*

*[At the third mosque,] I clumsily introduced myself [to the imam] as the pastor from down the street . . . I then handed him my letter, which he opened and read as I stood there awkwardly. I remember the imam, a man short in stature, slowly looking down at the letter in the bright September sun, then up into my face, then down, then up, and each time he looked up, his eyes were more moist. Suddenly, he threw his arms around me - a perfect stranger. . . . I still remember the feeling of his head pressed against my chest, squeezing me as if I were his long-lost brother. . . .*

*My host welcomed me not with hostility or even suspicion, but with the open heart of a friend. And so that day a friendship began between an Evangelical pastor named Brian and a Muslim imam we'll call Ahmad. . . . It's one thing to say you love humanity in general, whatever their religion; it's quite another to learn to love this or that specific neighbour with his or her specific religion. So, do you have a Sikh neighbour, a Hindu co-worker, a Muslim business associate, a Buddhist member of your PTA, a New Age second cousin? Invite them into companionship over a cup of tea or coffee. Ask them questions. Display unexpected interest in them, their traditions, their beliefs, and their stories. Learn why they left what they left, why they stay, where they stay, why they love what they love. Enter their world, and welcome them into your world, without judgment. If they reciprocate, welcome their reciprocation; if not, welcome their non reciprocation. Experience conviviality. Join the conspiracy of plotting for the common good together.*

Brian D. McLaren, *Why Did Jesus, Moses, the Buddha, and Mohammed Cross the Road? Christian Identity in a Multi-Faith World* (Jericho Books: 2012), 223, 225, 226, 231.

# THIS WEEK

**Saturday 1 May** - 6.30pm – St John’s - **Family Mass** (livestreamed)

## **Sunday 2 May**

9.30am – St John’s – **Mass – fully booked** (livestreamed)

11am – Prayer Room - **Mass** (pre-recorded, streamed)

11.15am – St Mary Magdalene’s – **Family Mass – fully booked**

4.30pm – St John’s – **Mass – a few seats still available**

## **Monday 3 May**

10.00am – St John’s – **Mass** (livestreamed, no booking required)

7-8.15pm – **Zoom Meeting – Gospel Sharing and Reflection – Open to All** - to join in over Zoom, go to <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86106477773?pwd=amJrQXMzWkMzWUFZRUpUUGRXWXhrdz09>

**Tuesday 4 May** - 10am – Prayer Room – **Mass** (livestreamed) **NB Change from normal time**

**Wednesday 5 May** - 10.00am – St John’s – **Mass** (livestreamed, no booking required)

## **Thursday 6 May**

10.00am – St Mary Magdalene’s – **Mass** (livestreamed, no booking required)

7.30pm – St John’s Hall – **Baptism Preparation Course (second evening)**

## **Friday 7 May**

8.45am - St John’s – **Requiem Mass for Isa McAffertey** - livestreamed

11am - **Rosary Group** – ‘Anyone can join, especially if you have Facebook Messenger, but also on WhatsApp, or just on the phone. Sometimes it takes time for us all to join in, but we always manage. Please join us.

Message Maria Igoe on 07981333219 or [mariaigoe@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:mariaigoe@yahoo.co.uk)’

7pm – St John’s - **Wedding Rehearsal for Alasdair Preston and Angela Ziba**

## **Saturday 8 May**

1pm – St John’s – **Wedding of Angela Ziba and Alasdair Preston**

6.30pm – St John’s – **Mass (booking required)**

## **Sunday 9 May**

9.30am – St John’s – **Mass** (livestreamed) (**booking required**) **with Baptism of Josie and Sonny Stewart**

11.00am – Prayer Room – **Mass** (pre-recorded, streamed)

11.15am – St Mary Magdalene’s – **Mass (booking required)**

## From Archbishop Leo’s Weekly Ad Clerum

**Safeguarding Training** - If you volunteer with children or vulnerable adults please ensure that you register for the Induction Part 1 safeguarding training. All the details you need can be found at <https://archedinburgh.org/administration/safeguarding-training/>

**St Mary’s University** - Masters courses in Theology and Education will begin in September at the Gillis Centre Campus in Strathearn Road, Edinburgh, run by St Mary’s University in partnership with the Archdiocese. All information is available on the St Mary’s University website: [stmarys.ac.uk/Edinburgh](http://stmarys.ac.uk/Edinburgh)

**Ordination to the Diaconate** - Josh Moir, 27, a seminarian for our Archdiocese, is being ordained a deacon on Sunday 2 May. Please keep him in your prayers as he takes this important step towards priesthood.

**Marian month of May** - Pope Francis is encouraging Catholics across the world to dedicate the Marian month of May to invoking the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary for the end of the pandemic.

**Scottish elections** - The election to Holyrood is on Thursday 6 May. Please visit the Catholic Parliamentary Office website ([rcpolitics.org](http://rcpolitics.org)) where you will find a resources section with information on key issues to consider ahead of voting.

**Leprosy Mission's Day of Prayer** - Join Christians across the world who are praying for a world without leprosy on Wednesday 12 May. Zoom prayer sessions take place throughout the day. Find out more at [leprosymission.org/dayofprayer](http://leprosymission.org/dayofprayer)

**Laudato Si' week** - This takes place from 16-24 May as part of the fifth anniversary of Pope Francis' encyclical on caring for our common home. Resources and more information can be found at [LaudatoSiWeek.org](http://LaudatoSiWeek.org)

**Mailing List** - Stay updated on news from across the Archdiocese by subscribing at [archedinburgh.org/news-events/](http://archedinburgh.org/news-events/)

**YouTube** - Archdiocesan online events are recorded and posted on YouTube. You can find them at [bit.ly/ArchYouTube](http://bit.ly/ArchYouTube)

## A Mass to mark the 25th Anniversary of Fr Norman Cooper's Death St John's – Thursday 20 May – 7pm

Fr Norman was a much-loved assistant priest in St John's in the early 1980's, who tragically fell to his death on 20 May 1996, climbing in the Cuillins in Skye, while away for a short midweek break in Applecross with his 'support group' of priests (including Fr Jock). If you would like to attend, please email ([stjohnsandstmarymagdalenes@gmail.com](mailto:stjohnsandstmarymagdalenes@gmail.com) or ring (0131 669 5447) the parishes' administrator, Enrico to book a place.

## NOTICEBOARD

### Advance Warning of our next Baptism Preparation Course

at 7.30pm in St John's Hall on Thursday 3 and 10 June .... please make contact with Fr Jock by phone or email if you wish to have a child baptised and would like to enrol for the course.

### White Flower Appeal – by The Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child

**Aileen Hall and Maria Igoe, our parishes' pro-life reps, write:** 'Each tiny life extinguished by abortion is a tragedy. This new initiative by SPUC Scotland will enable us to remember each of these babies and pray that they are not forgotten.

Tiny babies are the primary victims of abortion. Many others are affected by it. For example, women who feel under pressure to have an abortion may suffer mentally and/or physically for many years after the event. Men who want to be fathers can be denied the opportunity to hold and cherish their children. Our country, with its aging population, is losing 14,000 of the next generation every year.

**On Saturday 22 May 2021, at Carfin Grotto, SPUC Scotland will display 14,000 white flower images, one for every child lost to abortion in Scotland in one year, to create a 'carpet of flowers for the unborn'. Bishop Toal will bless the physical display at 2pm. If you would like to sponsor a virtual flower, please visit [www.whiteflower.org.uk](http://www.whiteflower.org.uk) or call SPUC Scotland (0141 221 2094) to make a donation.'**

### The Oasis

**Theresa McMurtry writes:** 'The Oasis is a Catholic bulletin offering the Support of Faith during Covid-19 times. You can view or download it by clicking [here](#) or request your hard copy to the Parish House.'

### TO CATHOLIC UNIVERSE AND CATHOLIC TIMES READERS IN THE PARISHES:

Andrea Black, Circulation manager of the Universe, writes: 'If you are unable to collect your paper at Mass you can now get it delivered direct to your home every week post free (it's quick and it's simple) just go to [www.thecatholicuniverse.com](http://www.thecatholicuniverse.com) or call us on 0161 820 5722 and we will arrange delivery for you.

special offer 3 months: - £25.00  
special offer 12 months: - £99.00  
digital copy: - 12 months: £55.00 or  
digital copy/and hard copy for: - £115.00 All papers are covid safe and packed in a sterile component.'

## **The squirrel's heart-beat:**

*If we had a keen vision and feeling of all human life, in its joys and sorrows, it would be like hearing the grass grow and the squirrel's heart beat, and we should hear that amazingly rich song of humanity which lies on the other side of silence.*

(Adapted by Peter Miller from a passage in Middlemarch by George Eliot)

## **Pax Christi International urges the United Nations to oppose impending home evictions by Israel in the neighbourhoods of Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan.**

[Please click here for a PDF version of the letter.](#) We ask that you share this letter widely within your networks.

Pax Christi International has sent an urgent letter to the members of the UN Security Council to immediately oppose Israel's impending plans to forcibly evict Palestinians from their homes in East Jerusalem.

These families, expelled from their land during the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, were resettled in the East Jerusalem neighbourhoods of Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan. They are now threatened to lose their homes once again. Under international law, East Jerusalem was illegally annexed in 1967 by Israel and is considered by the international community as occupied territory. The first of these eviction orders was executed on 2 May 2021 leaving numerous persons, many of whom are old or children, homeless during a global pandemic. Any hope for a just and sustainable peace is slowly being chipped away by such attempts to create facts on the ground. We urge you to raise your voice and demand that eviction and demolition of Palestinian homes stop now.'

*For more information, please contact Erin Green, Communications Coordinator, Pax Christi International at [e.green@paxchristi.net](mailto:e.green@paxchristi.net).*

## **Drawing Power – A Reflection by Joseph Donders**

'No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father ...' (John 6.44)

*Jesus speaks of a mysterious power penetrating this whole world. It is so mysterious that we cannot see, smell, touch, hear or taste it directly. It is everywhere.*

*There are more of those hidden energy fields. Early in the morning there is silence, no sound. Yet, the room is full of frequencies, waves, vibrations, and electric power fields. Pressing a button on your radio brings those frequencies to life, monks singing their plainchant in a monastery, hard rock from a group in London, a symphony orchestra in Cleveland, and voice from all over the world. Switching on television, you tap into another energy field that connects you with events in Beijing and Moscow, Pago Pago and Brussels.*

*All that energy was there without being visible, without being noticed. Enormous forces are hiding in nature, seeds that grow into trees, plants that turn the whole day following the sun, insects that crawl around, animals looking for a nest to perpetuate their lives, people embracing each other – even the clouds are chasing each other in the wide, blue sky.*

*Jesus speaks about another power, a drawing power that influences all of creation, especially the whole of humanity. It is a kind of attraction, a divine attraction. God draws all of us through Jesus toward the original and final home, an energy that draws us to God and so to one another. Protestants and Catholics, Muslims and Jews, Americans and Russians, Asian and Europeans, Christians and Hindus, aren't we all dialoguing with each other more than ever before in our world? Although we often fight with each other, the idea that we all belong to the same human family is growing among us every day.*

*Indeed, a power is at work among and in us. Almighty God is drawing us to where all are coming from!*

## PARISH REGISTER

*Please pray for those who have died recently: Alec Nicolson, Izzie Docherty and Theresa O'Donnell*

*Please pray for those whose anniversaries occur around this time: Charlie Nowosielecki, Owen Connarty, John Prior jnr, Mollie Brogan, Jean Vanier and Diana Albemarle.*

**St John's May 1:-** Mollie Brogan (2002); Catherine Tracy (1992); Owen Connarty (1973); Patrick Taylor (1952); **May 2:-** Anne Brennan (2014); Alexander Wallace (2010); Joseph Cunningham (1991); Alexander Durkin (1940); Marjory Gilchrist; **May 3:-** Glenda Wood (1999); Annie Czaba (1995); Sarah Boyle; **May 4:-** Charlie Nowosielecki (2020); Henry Stuart Mackersy (1994); John McElroy (1987); Peter Moran (1985); **May 5:-** Kevin Flynn; **May 6:-** David M Metcalfe (2006); Theresa Henderson (1995); Edward Hanlon; **May 7:-** William Hobb (2020); Veronica Mackenzie (2015); Lorna Demarco (1971); James H McGrory (1957); Mary Macnamara; Bridget Murray.

**St Mary Magdalene's: May 1:-** John Spence (1995); **May 3:-** Alister Gilmour (1996); Ellen Keenan (1983); **May 5:-** Joseph Robertson (1998); **May 6:-** Bridget Dowie (1968); **May 7:-** William McPhillips (1998); Margaret Hanlon (1994);

**Sick Parishioners - St. John's:** Joyce Martin, Mike Iannarelli, Ernie Moran, Chloe Sutherland, May Thomson, Joyce Martin, Norah Bruce, Patricia Lawler, James Curnyn, Celia Stone, Eddie Clark, Margaret MacLeod, Sheena Sivell, Catherine Walker, , Ruth Viso, Mary Grady, Susan Cammach, Pauli Walker, Dolores Jones, Evelyn Oldershaw, Anna Butler, May Flynn, Vincent Knowles, John Cregan, young Saoirse Golden, John Whyte, Frances Cunningham, David Reid, Frank Logan, Charlotte McGregor, Betty Dougal, Anne Thomson, Eileen Brown, Mike Noonan, Sarah McManus, Mike Burns, Sr Jennifer Lindsay, Maureen Low, Pat Hunter, Alan Blyth, Mary Slight, Mary Phair, Rose Thornton, Kitty Dykes, Norman Telfer, Philip Jamieson, Alf MacNamara, Maureen Lawrie, Kathie Gallagher, Erin Corbett, Roz Byers, Marie Angela Crolla and Lorraine Syme.

**Sick Parishioners - St. Mary Magdalene's:** Mgr Tony Duffy, Graham Neilson, Sheila and George Service, Chris English, Jacqueline Marinello, Andrew Farmer, Ray Donnelly, Sam Burns, Clive Davis, Ella Ayers, Isobel Phillips, Denis Davidson, Margaret Duffy, Maria Scott Jnr, Louise Gorman, Ann Dockrell, John Prior, John Newell, Michael McPhillips, Bridget Malone, Charles Malcolm, Margaret Ryan, Jacqueline Hannan, Julie Keegan, Rose McKay, Laurie Wallace, Annie Watson, David O'Donnell, Andrew Banks, Jude Ferguson, and Mary and James Muir.

**Please pray for sick friends and relatives of parishioners, including:** Irene Ewing, Canon Andrew Monaghan, Emily Buchanan, Audrey Burgess, Ray Perrett, William Young, Nick Koning, Kerry Horn, Ann Thorp, John Mackenzie, Alistair Grieves, Tonino Howard, Jimmy McBride, baby Josh Simpson, Maureen McEvoy, Helen McCann, Rhoda Tumboli, Dani Miniette, Marina and Maria Calanna, Alec Hamill, Peter Millar, Annabelle Cervantes, Nan Doig, Rachel Kennedy, Leo Stone, Dago Dinis, baby Baxter Sweeney, Sr May Lewis, Joan Murray Hamilton, Sr Margaret Mary, Billy McPhillips, Jean Nelson, Margaret Anne Marton, Betty Blyth, Lauren Fitzpatrick, Fr Christy Fox, Joe Greenan, Michael Igoe, Katie McAnenny, Robert Shaw, baby Kinsley McMillan, John Walsh, Moira McConville, Margaret and Victoria Roddam, John Williams, Clare Richardson, Karen MacKay, Laura Anderson, Gloria Crolla, Richard Reid, James O'Rourke, Tommy Muir, Janice Todd, Lauli Ridge, Seval Kazimoglu, Anne Young, James Shepherd, Peter Hanley, Jennifer Kay, Janie Low, Ranier Carpo, Marie Baird, Andrew Franklin, Frank Palmer, Paul Henderson, Ellen Green, Andrew Preston, Jamie Mitchell, Eunice Macdonald, Peter Bromley, Kathleen Cawley, Margo Law, Misia Jack, Hannah Muldoon, Emma Bromet, Edward Caulfield, Igor Rekowski, Diana Hibbert, Joan Brooks, Mary Turnbull, Stuart Falconer, and young Ray Donovan Syme

### Offertory Collections – 25 April 2021

St Mary Magdalene	St John the Evangelist
£242.20 total including Offertory of £71.20 and Gift Aid of £171.00	£1,303.36 total including Offertory of £385.96, Gift Aid of £117.40 and £800.00 Online Donations
Ecclesiastical Student Fund £82.00	Ecclesiastical Student Fund - £77.00 Easter Special Collection £100.00

*Thank You*



# A REFLECTION ON THE READINGS FOR THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

## John 15: 1-8

I was aware of the “man-drawer” long before the comedian Michael McIntyre drew it to the nation’s attention. When I was a child at home it was lovingly referred to as the “second drawer down” and to the mind of a 7 or 8 year old it was a cornucopia of pleasure for in here would be found many magical things, including old spectacles with scratched lenses, pens that no longer worked, elastic bands, lengths of string, an eraser that was so old it had begun to crumble, drawing pins, safety pins, bits of fabric that didn’t seem to serve any purpose but which might come in handy one day! You probably had one like it when you were younger – you will certainly have one now - but the new variant will also contain old batteries that may or may not work, as well as old mobile ‘phones. The useless pens, elastic bands and drawings pins are an ever present. Indeed, the drawing pins will lurk there until November. Knowing that they are needed for the hanging of the decorations, they will exercise their metaphysical powers - for they have the ability to completely disappear, prompting a trip on our part to WH Smith. In January, when the decorations are taken down, they will be back in the drawer as if they had never been away and they will be joined by the new pack of drawing pins, happy that their tribe is growing.

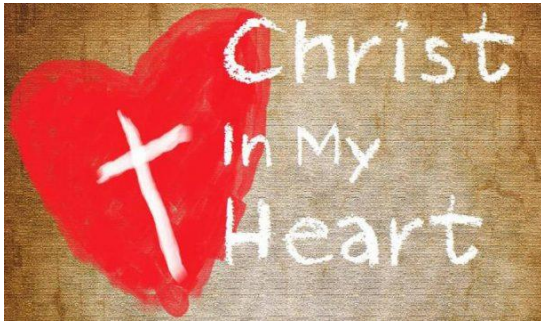
Upcycling is ‘on trend’ these days. It seems that many of us are waking up to the fact that a throwaway society isn’t always the most sensible or desirable way of using the earth’s finite resources. Clothing is a particular scandal, so I was encouraged to read on Thursday that the supermarket chain, Asda, intends to start selling second-hand clothes. It’s a fine line that we are called to draw. Hoarding goods in the hope that one day they may come in handy is as worrying as feeling the need to buy something new each week, just to make us feel better. Like so much of life it’s all about balance and compromise. A warm memory for me is when I would visit my good friend, Jock, and happily sit in the company of his mother as she darned socks and worn elbows on pullovers. With a husband and four sons she had a lot of darning to do! She would finish the last piece with an air of triumph. In part, as a result of her inspiration, I buy some of my clothes from charity shops, and most of my kitchen paraphernalia – but I also know that eventually some of it, if not most of it, will reach the end of its usefulness and must go. I give it as much opportunity as possible to prolong its functionality and am reluctant to discard anything with potential – even the worn-out biro that might miraculously start to work again!

This weekend’s Gospel has an uncompromising message. God will tend the Vine with great care and attention to its development and growth. He will wield his pruning shears whenever the need arises. He always has one eye on the health of the vine and another on the size of the harvest. The challenge for us is to ensure that we are amongst the fruitful branches. If we persistently become the sort of branch that bears no fruit, then we know He will discard us. The positive and hopeful aspect of the message is that he will only discard those parts that are persistently fruitless. This is our hope and our challenge. He will prune only so that we can become more fruitful.

An oft-asked question is: *Why do bad things happen to good people?* Sometimes, ill fortune befalls us, too. We rail against a particular cross. ‘*Why me?*’ we ask. Then we look back and we realise that the moments of greatest darkness are the same moments that bring real growth and development. They are the moments of our ‘pruning’. Tests come our way and invariably cause growth. We must avoid stagnation at all cost – and there is always something we can do to prove our worth and usefulness. The secret lies in remaining close to Jesus Christ for, as he promises in this weekend’s Gospel: *Whoever remains in me with me in him, bears fruit in plenty; for cut off from me, you can do nothing.*

# FINDING THE HIDDEN TREASURE by Benignus O'Rourke

## Chapter 16 – A quiet place



In our journey into silence, we are not left on our own. What we are invited to do is to find a quiet place and set aside some time.

To find a quiet place where we can rest and allow the Lord to gather us into his peace we do not have to look far. That place is in ourselves, but we have never been shown how to find it.

*'Leave behind all noise and confusion,' Augustine counsels. 'Look within yourself and see whether there be some sweet hidden place within where you can be free from noise and argument, where you need not be carrying on your disputes, and planning to have your own stubborn way. Hear the word in quietness that you may understand it.'*

To reach the quiet oasis of solitude within we first have to try to bring our body, mind and spirit into a state of quietness. But the more we try to bring our mind to inner quiet, the more it seems to rebel. In a little poem of four lines, 'The Balloon of the Mind', W. B. Yeats likens the mind to a balloon that is tossed around by the wind, and imagines his hands bringing it under control:

*Hands, do what you're bid!  
Bring the balloon of the mind  
That bellies and drags in the wind  
Into its narrow shed.*

Fortunately, there are techniques that will help us bring the mind into its narrow shed. Attending to posture and to our breathing will help us find the still centre of our being. The general advice can be summed up in a few words: be attentive and open; sit still; sit straight; breathe slowly, deeply and naturally.

So, if our back and our body allow it, we learn to sit on an upright chair with spine straight, head erect, and chin tucked in. Our hands are on our lap; our feet firmly planted on the ground. We need to sit alert, relaxed and receptive. We close our eyes or lower them to the ground. Or we might prefer to fix our gaze on one thing - an icon, a light, a flower. We begin by taking a few deep breaths as we start to relax. Then we observe our breathing. We do not force it. We do not do anything except watch our breathing for as long as we can.

We choose our phrase or our word and abandon all effort except to repeat that little word or phrase. We come back to our word, without annoyance or upset, whenever we find we have wandered. Gently, come back to the centre, to where Christ is, in the centre of our heart.

And we keep doing this no matter how many times the mind bobs about in any wind that blows. No matter how often we have to drag the mind back to its narrow shed, we do not get bothered or give up. We rest and leave everything in God's hands.