

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

35 Brighton Place, Edinburgh EH15 1LL

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Parish Priest: *Fr. Jock Dalrymple:*

0131 669 5447

Deacon – *Revd Eddie White:*

07986 015772

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

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

*Parish Administrator: Mr Enrico Fertini*

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

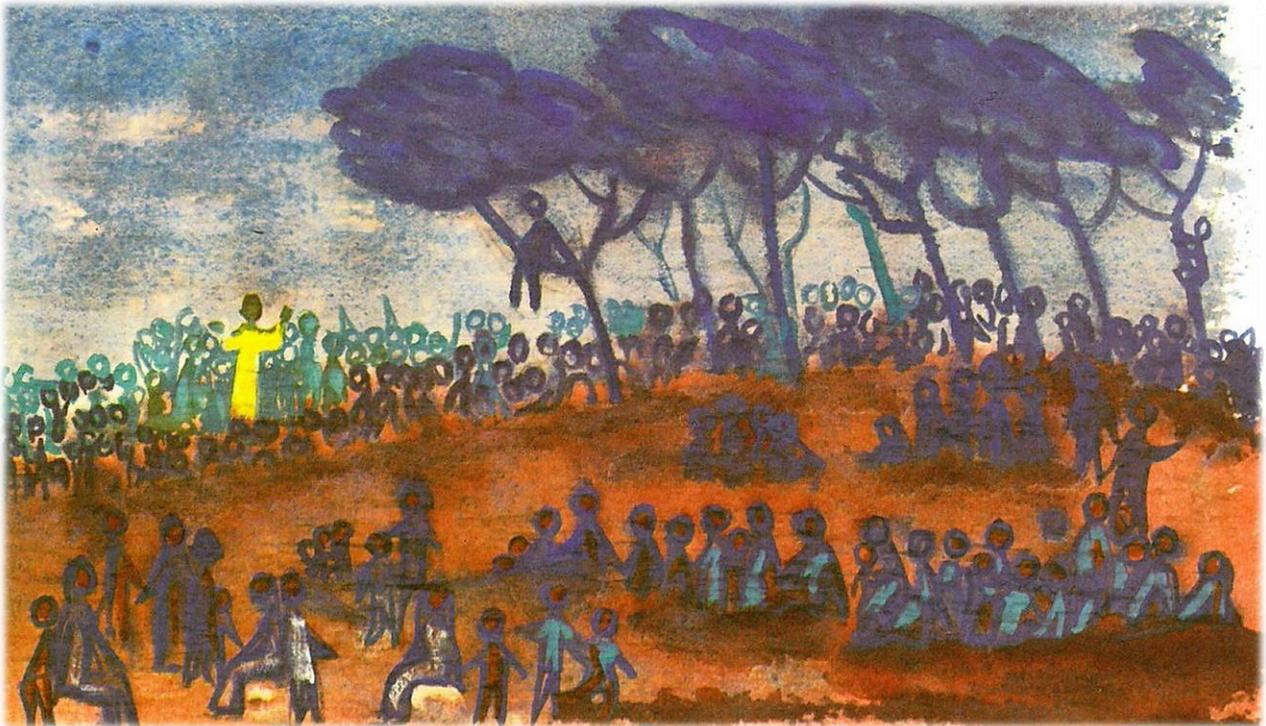
*Web address: [www.stjohnsportobello.co.uk](http://www.stjohnsportobello.co.uk)*

*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)*

## *Sixth Sunday of the Year - 13 February 2022*



*(Illustration by Eric de Saussure, friar of Taizé, taken from "Bible Illustree", 1968)*

*"Happy you who are hungry now: you shall be satisfied" (Luke 6:21)*

A warm welcome to **Fr Henry McLaughlin**, with us for this weekend's Masses, and to **Fr Jim Smith**, covering our weekday masses, before **Fr Jock** returns on Thursday from his post-Christmas, post-Covid break.

***PLEASE SIGN UP FOR A HALF-HOUR 'SLOT' DURING 40 HOURS ADORATION (Quarant'ore) – Sunday 20 to Tuesday 22 February – the lists are at the back of both churches and also available on-line***

Archbishop Leo has asked us all to participate in 40 Hours Adoration – different parishes each weekend – as a central plank in the renewal of Church Life in our archdiocese after/towards the end of the Pandemic.

**Deacon Eddie writes:** 'We have just finalised our plans for our Forty Hours Adoration and now have a structure for the three days.'

Adoration has a rich history in the Church: last and this week's newsletter will offer reading material to help offer a background to it. If and when you come to Adoration, there will also be further material available as a help to focus - some prayers and reflections which we can use to help us all get the most out of our time in Adoration. For those who want to come but are worried their young children might be a distraction, there will be colouring sheets and pencils available too. **Everybody** is welcome....

We will be using our 3 chapels for Adoration: both our churches of St John's and St Mary Magdalene's and also the 'upper room', the **Prayer Room in the Parish House**. The Prayer Room is a space which became very familiar with many parishioners (near and far!) as we gathered together as a community over lockdown...it is a very peaceful place in which to adore the Lord.

### **Sunday 20 February**

We will begin in St John's immediately after 9.30am Mass with Adoration from 10.30am until 6pm. Then from 6pm to 10pm, Adoration will take place in the Prayer Room.

### **Monday 21 February**

6-10am - St John's  
10am Mass in St John's - All Welcome  
10.30am - Noon, Prayer Room.  
Noon - 4pm - St Mary Magdalene's.  
4pm-7pm St John's  
7pm-8pm Holy Hour in St John's - All Welcome  
8pm-10pm St John's

### **Tuesday 22 February**

(10-11am Requiem Mass in St John's for Margaret Mackenzie)  
11am-10pm St John's

## ***Pastoral Letter to the Catholics of Scotland On the Restoration of the Mass Obligation in the Dioceses of Scotland***

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The obligation for Catholics to celebrate Sunday as a Holy Day by gathering together for Mass will be restored from the First Sunday in Lent, Sunday 6th March.

Given the easing of restrictions in every other walk of life, the Church looks forward to welcoming Catholics back to Holy Mass. As always, the obligation does not apply to those who are sick and their carers or to those aware of their greater vulnerability to the virus.

May the continuing recovery of our country bring new hope to us all especially those who are ill, those who mourn loved ones, those who are apprehensive and those who have sustained us in so many ways throughout the Pandemic.

We, the Bishops of Scotland, take this opportunity to thank our clergy and our parish volunteers for all their efforts. May our Lenten journey this year lead us to a renewed appreciation of our Catholic faith, of the celebration of the Eucharist and of the presence of the Risen Christ who is always at our side.

**Bishop Hugh Gilbert - President - Bishops' Conference of Scotland**

## **THIS WEEK**

### **Saturday 12 February**

6.00pm – Youtube/Facebook – **Mass (pre-recorded)**  
6.30pm – St John's – **Vigil Mass**  
9.15pm – Zoom – **Prayer at Night**

**Sunday 13 February**9.30am – St John’s – **Mass** – livestreamed11.15am – St Mary Magdalene’s – **Mass**9.15pm – Zoom – **Prayer at Night****Monday 14 February**10.00am – St John’s – **Mass** – livestreamed10.30am – St John’s Hall - **St John’s Charity Coffee Morning**7.00-8.15pm – Zoom – **Gospel Sharing**<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87162079211?pwd=aGFMeiZFNuFXVGliKzE2MTNPNVNdZ09>9.15pm – Zoom – **Prayer at Night****Tuesday 15 February**7.00pm – St John’s - **Mass** – livestreamed9.15pm – Zoom – **Prayer at Night****Wednesday 16 February**10am – St John’s - **Mass** – livestreamed9.15pm – Zoom – **Prayer at Night****Thursday 17 February**10.00am – St Mary Magdalene’s – **Mass** – livestreamed9.15pm – Zoom – **Prayer at Night****Friday 18 February**10.00am – St John’s – **Mass** – livestreamed9.15pm – Zoom – **Prayer at Night****Saturday 19 February**12 midday – St John’s - **Baptism of Connor and Jack Reid**6.00pm – Youtube/Facebook – **Mass (pre-recorded)**6.30pm – St John’s – **Vigil Mass**9.15pm – Zoom – **Prayer at Night****Sunday 20 February**9.30am – St John’s – **Mass** – livestreamed – **with Baptisms**10.30am - 6.00pm – St John’s – **Adoration (Quarant’ore)**11.15am – St Mary Magdalene’s – **Mass**6.00pm – 10.00pm – Prayer Room - **Adoration**9.15pm – Zoom – **Prayer at Night****IN THE COMING WEEKS****Sunday 20 February-Tuesday 22 February - 40 HOURS ADORATION (Quarant’ore) - in St John’s, St Mary Magdalene’s and the Parish House Prayer Room****Tuesday 22 February – 10am – St John’s – Requiem Mass for Margaret Mackenzie****Thursday 24 February – 7.30pm-8.30pm – St John’s Hall – Baptismal Preparation, please contact Fr Jock****Saturday 26 February – 10am – St John’s – Mass for the Bereaved****Friday 4 March – 11am – St Mary Magdalene’s – World Day of Prayer****(Jennifer Morris writes:** Every year on the first Friday in March, Christians around the world gather using the same form of worship. This year’ service in our area is in **St Mary Magdalene’s**. You are most warmly invited to come along to the service and worship with Christians of all denominations. There will be refreshments in the hall afterwards – a chance to meet and chat - something so sadly missed during the worst of Covid.)

## From Archbishop Leo's Weekly 'Ad Clerum'

**40 Hours' Devotion** - Each parish in the Archdiocese is having 40 hours of Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament to help renew our Faith and love of Jesus Christ. It continues from this Sunday at Star of the Sea, North Berwick and at St Margaret's, Davidson Mains, Edinburgh. Full programme for the Archdiocese is at [bit.ly/40hoursschedule](http://bit.ly/40hoursschedule). Find out more about Eucharistic Adoration: [bit.ly/40HoursPlaylist](http://bit.ly/40HoursPlaylist)

**Vacancy** - The Archdiocese is recruiting an **Adviser in Religious Education (primary schools)**. While the post is full-time, applicants looking for part-time or flexible working patterns are also encouraged to apply. Please see [archedinburgh.org.uk/news-events](http://archedinburgh.org.uk/news-events) for full details.

**Making Disciples Seminar** - Learn how God is at work in your life and in the lives of others in this three-day seminar. It will sharpen your evangelisation skills and show how each of us can be an instrument in God's hand as we walk as His disciples. It takes place from this Friday 25 - Sun 27 February at St Kentigern's Church, 26-28 Parkgrove Avenue, Barnton, EH4 7QR. To register and for more info visit [bit.ly/disciplesseminar](http://bit.ly/disciplesseminar)

**African/Caribbean Mass** - The new monthly African/Caribbean Mass for the Archdiocese will be celebrated at St Patrick's, Cowgate, Edinburgh, at 1pm on Sunday 6 March. All welcome.

### A WARM INVITATION TO OUR ON-LINE PRAYER AT NIGHT – 9.15pm Every Evening

The prayer, led very gently by parishioners Donald Scott and Lesley Reid, will start at 9.15pm each evening and last for 10 minutes. For ease, the Zoom link will be the same each evening:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9129622900?pwd=b1F1THhtY3NVeGptOWY0VGw2K2xBQT09>

Meeting ID: 912 962 2900 Passcode: Prayer

## NOTICEBOARD

### Request for Invigilators from Holyrood RC High School

**Joan Daly, Headteacher, writes:** 'Dear Parishioners. We are looking for Invigilators to join us in Holy Rood for the main exams which begins on 26 April 2022. Please use link for more information:

<https://appointeeopportunities.sqa.org.uk/vacancy/invigilator-464682.html>

If you are interested in joining the team in Holy Rood RC High School or if you have any questions about this, please email our Business Manager [Derek.Ferguson@ea.edin.sch.uk](mailto:Derek.Ferguson@ea.edin.sch.uk)'

### Duddingston Kirk Garden Room Café' - Manager Job Vacancy

**Lucy, from their office, writes:** 'This position is seasonal from April to October inclusive. The Garden Room is staffed by volunteers supported by the Garden Room Committee. The Manager is required to work 17 hours per week, Thursday to Sunday.

Salary: £11:50ph. The Applicant should have good interpersonal and organisational skills.

We are looking for someone who embraces diversity and has a welcoming and pleasing manner to all visitors and volunteers. Closing Date for Applications: Friday 26th February. For Further information, job application and job description, please contact: [office@duddingstonkirk.co.uk](mailto:office@duddingstonkirk.co.uk)'

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If anyone is interested in a used tennis table board, we have one in the Parish House garage, and we don't want it to be covered in dust; it can be donated to people needing it and being able to collect it from there. Please contact Enrico in the office if keen to get it for free.'

# A REFLECTION ON THE READINGS FOR THE SIXTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR - JEREMIAH 17: 5-8 - PSALM 1

The days of breaking down by the side of the road are, for many, a thing of the past. Some of us have experienced that awful sickening feeling as the car spluttered to a halt, and we limped to somewhere safe where we could wait for help. You might call for the breakdown services or if you're on a motorway your first port of call might be the highways patrol. A nervous and sometimes agonising wait sees anxiety levels climb. You scan the horizon seeking the comfort of a flashing light be it yellow or blue. Anything will do, just give us hope, something to believe in. The rain is lashing down now but you resist the temptation to sit in the car. You remember someone once saying that is the worst thing to do. Surely, they won't be much longer.... Will they? A passing motorist slows down – the ubiquitous 'white van man.' 'Can I give you a lift to the service station?' His offer is tempting. He looks a bit shifty, there's not a lot of room in the cab. You decline. 'I'll just wait, thanks.' It's cold and increasingly uncomfortable, and as you watch the red glow of his taillights disappearing into the distance, you wonder. You think to yourself: What is the worst thing that could have happened? But then a shiver that would have shaken the Tower of London brings you back to your senses. You wait. You make another telephone call. You are reassured that help is definitely on its way, and so, you wait.

I remember once, in 1985, I was officiating at a wedding where the bride was late, considerably late. It's a kind of unwritten custom for the bride to be a little late, but on this occasion, she was very late – two and a half hours late. She did not have far to travel, and we could rule out a breakdown of the bridal transport. The bride's mother went off to investigate and after about 45 minutes came back to re-assure the groom and the guests. Her words were not overwhelmingly convincing. Some of the guests 'popped out' for a quick cigarette, others chose to head off to the reception and wait in more comfortable surroundings. Marie, the bride-to-be, had something of a reputation and had a string of admirers. Was she having second thoughts? I was struggling to work out what to do for the best, what to advise. The situation was calling for someone to take a lead. The bride's mother went off again. Only John, the groom, remained peaceful and quiet. He was calm throughout. His faith in Marie was unshakeable and he would wait, no matter how long it took. And arrive, she did. His trust and faith were rewarded. Their marriage did not get off to the most auspicious of starts. I last heard from them in 2010 and they were still going – if not strong – then certainly steadily. The last time I checked, trust was holding its own.

The people of the Old Testament were used to waiting. They looked forward to the days of the Messiah when God would visit his people. Understandably as days grew into weeks, weeks into years, and years into decades, perseverance became a rare commodity, but nevertheless hope endured. Parents taught their children, and they in turn, taught theirs. From time to time, prophets grew up in their midst. Called by God, their vocation was to lead and encourage. One of these, Jeremiah, in today's first reading urges the people of Israel: *A blessing on the man who puts his trust in the Lord, with the Lord for his hope.* The Psalmist today goes on: *Happy indeed is the man whose delight is the law of the Lord, who ponders his law, day and night. Happy the man who has placed his trust in the Lord.* Trust is probably one of the greatest treasures at our disposal. We trust our spouse, we trust our children, children trust their parents. In the split second when I realise that resistance is futile, and the anaesthetist will have his way, I trust God and I trust the surgeon. Whether it be the skill-set of the chef, or the heating engineer repairing the gas boiler, we must learn to trust. When it comes to builders, I seem to have met more cowboys than in the whole cast of 'How the West was Won' but when I did find one it was akin to finding El Dorado. A tradesman who loses the trust of his customer base is on a one-way trip to Bankruptcy or a complete career change! When we recognise the real value of trust, we learn that a democracy that no longer has trust in its elected leaders is, similarly, on a one-way journey. Rudderless and directionless, God knows where it will end. More importantly we see the importance of trust in our personal lives. We are called upon to be people of trust and trustworthiness. The two are not the same. The first involves faith in God and everything he has taught us, the second, trustworthiness, is the quality we bring into the lives of those around us. The man or woman of trust is indeed like a fine jewel, to be held and treasured. We are called to be such men and women. This is our calling, and this is our gift to those around us and those we love.



*Please pray for those who have died recently:*

Marc Lee

*Please pray for those whose anniversaries occur around this time:*

Jane Murray – Jimmy Sangster – Margaret Scott  
Gerry Power senior – Vi Donaldson  
Canon Albert Franklin, former parish priest of St John’s  
Bryan Dockrell – Kevin Crow  
Maisie Marron

**Anniversaries:**

**St John’s**

**Feb.11:** Marie Buchanan (2005); Lucy Hughes (1989); Hannah Knowles (1964); Canon Albert Franklin (1955);  
**Feb.12:** Pat Kelly (1997); Bill Jacob (1984);  
**Feb.13:** William Lawrie (1973); John Duffy; Annie Nicholson;  
**Feb.14:** Jimmy Sangster (2020); Margaret Scott (2018); Mary Kathleen McConvill (2002); Bernard Halpenny (1985); William Hughes (1978); Patrick Gilroy (1966);  
**Feb.15:** Sr. Margaret O’Driscoll (1997); Vi Donaldson (2021);  
**Feb.16:** Charles Malcolm (1993); Betty McGuire (1987); John Denning (1959);  
**Feb.17:** Patrick Hughes (2011); May Lacey (1941);  
**St Mary Magdalene’s**  
**Feb.11:** Guido Torino (2014); Ian McLeod (1996);  
**Feb.12:** Mary Tully (2007);  
**Feb.15:** John O’Keefe (1982);  
**Feb.16:** Ellen Conway (1972);  
**Feb.17:** David Walker (2005);

**Please pray for those Parishioners who are sick:**

**St. John’s:** Maria Pacitti, Kim O’Neill, Sheila Service, Frances Connelly, Nessie Cairns, Alf McNamara, Fiona Connel, Inge Downey, John Freeman, May Thomson, Ann Dobie, Frank Logan, Sheelagh Dobson, Ernie Moran, Bob Kelly, Jean Bonar, Chloe Sutherland, Norah Bruce, Mike and Patricia Lawler, Ruth Viso, Mary Grady, Pauli Walker, Anna Butler, May Flynn, Vincent Knowles, John Cregan, young Saoirse Golden, John Whyte, Frances Cunningham, David Reid, Charlotte McGregor, Betty Dougal, Anne Thomson, Mike Noonan, Sarah McManus, Mike Burns, Sr Jennifer Lindsay, Maureen Low, Mary Slight, Rose Thornton, Kitty Dykes, Norman Telfer, Maureen Lawrie, Kathie Gallagher, Erin Corbett, Roz Byers, Marie Angela Crolla and Lorraine Syme.

**St Mary Magdalene’s:**

Maureen Forsyth, John Newall, Tom Bauld, Sam Burns, Ray Donnelly, Jacqueline Marinello, Sandra Watt, Mary Cole, Chris English, Andrew Farmer, Clive Davis, Isobel Phillips, Margaret Duffy, Maria Scott Jnr, Louise Gorman, Ann Dockrell, 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 our Parishioners:**

Melanie Ford, Gerry Mulvenna, Jaroslav Icina, Mary Taygarth,, Pat Mulvenna, young Niamh McDougall, Bridget Bonner, Roger Bromley, Bernard Traynor, Evelyn Tibbs, Helen Briton, Mary Thomson, Fr Raymond OCSO, Tony Rigg, Jozefine O’Connell, Robin Butler, Caroline Minto, Henrietta Fraser, Stuart Falconer, Nan Doig, Claire Johnston, Emma Bromet, Elizabeth, Baby Percy Keiran McShane, Colin Sandham, Lewis White, Baby Alfie McDevitt, Elizabeth and Gordon Marron, Dawn Clarke, William Kinsley, Katie McAnenny, John Kellagher, Joy Allan, Colin Raasch, Annie Ross, Christopher MacKinnon, Annabelle Cervantes, Emily Buchanan, Ann Thorp, baby Josh Simpson, Helen McCann, Dani Miniette,, Peter Millar, Leo Stone, Sr May Lewis, Joan Murray Hamilton, Sr Margaret Mary, Jean Nelson, Betty Blyth, Lauren Fitzpatrick, Fr Christy Fox, Michael Igoe, Robert Shaw, baby Kinsley McMillan, Margaret and Victoria Roddam, Clare Richardson, Karen MacKay, Laura Anderson, Richard Reid, James O’Rourke, Tommy Muir, James Shepherd, Peter Hanley, Andrew Franklin, Ellen Green, Jamie Mitchell, Eunice Macdonald, Peter Bromley, Edward Caulfield, Igor Rekowski, Diana Hibbert, Joan Brooks, Mary Turnbull and young Ray Donovan Syme

**Offertory Collections – 6 February 2022**

St Mary Magdalene	St John the Evangelist
£165.00 total including Offertory of £115.00 and Gift Aid of 50.00	£1120.20 total including Offertory of £151.80, Gift Aid of £247.40 and online donations of £721.00



The Pamoja Fashion team would like to thank everyone who supported them last Saturday; despite the terrible weather they raised £133.00. The Next Sale will be 5th of March, 9.30am to 1.30pm, at the same time as the Farmers’ Market.

# FINDING THE HIDDEN TREASURE by Benignus O'Rourke

(The Way of Silent Prayer, Darton, Longman & Todd LTD)

## Chapter 56 – The Source of Life



To live the new life that is offered us is to draw our energy from the source of life within us. As we have seen, too often we draw our energy from outside.

Now we no longer judge ourselves on our status in other people's eyes, or on our usefulness. We know that we are cherished and loved by God, and our daily prayer of silence keeps us in touch with this source of life and energy.

To draw all our energies together, and to focus them, is the work of silent prayer. *'To make a prayer of our work,'* says Augustine, *'we need to spend many hours in prayer, not working.'*

*'If I can but touch the hem of his cloak,'* said the woman in the Gospel story, *'I shall be healed.'* She did manage to touch it and she was healed. But Jesus was aware that power had gone out of him and looked to find her. He then praised her faith (**Luke 8:43-48**).

The power that Jesus radiated was renewed daily in prayer. After a day spent in attending to people, he would send his friends away and find a quiet place to pray. Once he stayed 40 days in the desert. St John of the Cross asks what Jesus did for those weeks. And the answer he gives is one word. He did 'nada'. Nothing. Jesus spent the time with the Father in silent communion.

A young doctor, going through a very stressful time in his life, came to our silent prayer group. A few months afterwards he wrote, *'I am pleased to say that my daily double "dose" of meditation is completely changing my life. My energy levels have risen dramatically. I now need two hours' less sleep at night and don't yawn during surgery! Also, slowly, my "cravings" are dropping away.'*

In **Souls on Fire** Elie Wiesel, a Jewish Romanian-born American writer and Holocaust survivor, quotes an old Jewish rabbi as saying: *'A person who does not keep an hour a day for themselves is not human. To be involved in other people's lives can become too absorbing. In order to give, we must first "be". And our being is rooted in solitude.'*

The trouble with most of us is that we try to go on giving even when the energy has been exhausted. We run on empty tanks. It is to fill our empty vessels that we come before the Lord in silence. When we stay a long while in silence, doing nothing, we are allowing the power that is within us to be gathered together and flow through us into the lives of all we meet.

# THE SYNODAL PATH FOR A SYNODAL CHURCH

(an article from the FAR EAST MAGAZINE, by Columban Missionary Fr Tom O'Reilly)

We are familiar with adversarial debate in our parliamentary systems. The government is expected to present policies and pursue its agenda with vigorous determination. The role of opposition is to expose with equal vigour the flaws in the government's positions and present alternatives. One enters negotiations to promote and defend positions, often having red lines beyond which one is unwilling to go. The whole process is driven by robust debate which usually produces winners and losers.

The synodal process is very different. We embark on a journey, seeking together the way forward for the Church. We speak and listen with the conviction that each one has something to contribute to the search and something to learn from others. We share openly and honestly, not ideas or theories, but our lived experience of Church life and mission – the joys and sorrow, the hopes and fears, the successes and failures. We do this in the context of a global pandemic crisis which has exposed, and amplified fault lines running through humanity and is challenging all to seek new ways of living together. Reflecting together on our experiences, we hope to discover processes which help the Church live in communion, achieve participation, and open itself to mission.

Attentive listening is more important than speaking. Pope Francis speaks of the “*dynamism of mutual listening*” which drives the synodal process. We listen to one another, including those on the margins and those who have drifted away from the Church. We listen to voices outside the Church, paying special attention to the cry of the poor and excluded ones in our world and the cry of the exploited earth. Ultimately, all our listening leads to discernment, a sifting through what we are hearing to detect the voice of the Spirit indicating the way forward. This calls for periods of silent reflection and prayer. With the help of the Spirit, we hope for consensus or a harmony in which diversity is not divisive but enriching as we respond to our common baptismal call to be missionary disciples of Jesus.

As we reflect together on our lived experience at a time of change, we listen to the living Word of God. In recent talks on the synodal process, Pope Francis has been reflecting on the Acts of Apostles which he calls “*the first and most important manual of ecclesiology*”. In the story of Acts we get many glimpses of the early Church striving to remain open to the guidance of the Spirit in its internal and external mission. A good example is the Council of Jerusalem (**Acts 15**), the event which for centuries is taken as the model of synods celebrated by the Church.

The predominantly Jewish Church was at major crossroad with the influx of large numbers of non-Jews. Some argued with Gentiles, in becoming Christians, must adopt Jewish laws and practices. Other insisted this was not necessary. The question gave rise to “*no small dissension and debate*” (**Acts 15:2**). The breakthrough came when the participants in the Council shifted from an argumentative to a listening mode. They listened to Peter sharing his experience in receiving the Gentile centurion Cornelius into the Church (see **Acts 10-11**). Peter had been very reluctant to do anything contrary to strict adherence to Jewish ritual regulations. He needed a vision from God and the prompting of the Holy Spirit to change his mind. He was also “converted” by listening to Cornelius' experience of God. Only then did he share the Good News of Jesus with him. It became increasingly clear to Peter that the Spirit was at work in the lives of Cornelius and his household. Peter's role was to confirm what the Spirit was doing. He learned by listening that Jewish and Gentiles are saved by the gift of the same Spirit, rather than by law, and this was the message he shared with the Council of Jerusalem. After Peter finished speaking, the meeting remained silent and listened to Paul and Barnabas sharing their experience of what God was doing in their Gentile mission.

James, the local leader in the Jerusalem church, pointed out that the experiences shared gave a deeper insight into what is said in the Word of God (**Acts 15:15-18**). He then went on to propose a way forward with which the whole assembly concurred. They reached a consensus which “*seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us*” (**Acts 15:28**). The decision was to press on with mission among Gentiles without imposing Jewish laws on them. Steps were also taken to foster common life between Jewish and Gentile Christians, while respecting their diverse cultures. Mission and communion go hand-in-hand. The aim of the present Synod is to foster and develop the Church's synodal nature – the people of God walking in communion to pursue a common mission through the participation of all. If this is to come about, we must heed the advice in the Book of Revelation: “*Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches*” (**Rev 2:7**)