

THE PARISHES OF ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST AND ST MARY MAGDALENE

35 Brighton Place, Edinburgh EH15 1LL

Bingham Avenue, Edinburgh EH15 3HY

Parish Priest:

Fr. Jock Dalrymple:

0131 669 5447

Deacon:

Revd. Eddie White:

07986 015772

Sacrament of Reconciliation: after the Vigil Mass (7.30pm on Saturday) or any time by appointment

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

Web address: www.stmarymagdalenes.co.uk

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

Joint e-mail address for our sister parishes: stjohnsandstmarymagdalenes@gmail.com



Fifth Sunday of Easter - 15 May 2022

*"I give you a new commandment: love one another; just as I loved you, you also must love one another."
(John 13:34)*

(This terracotta depiction of the Beloved Disciple, St John, leaning on Jesus' chest at the Last Supper, is on one of the walls of the Prayer Room in the Parish House. Brother Roland, when he went to visit a hermit on the island of Patmos in Greece in the early 1960's, in search of direction in his life, was granted a single sentence by the hermit: "St John was close enough to Jesus to hear his heartbeat")

We Continue to pray for Peace – 'Dear Lord, please grant the people of Ukraine, Russia and Belarus, Your Peace, Your Justice, Your Reconciliation, Your Forgiveness, Your Love. Amen.'

THE NEXT SYNODAL STEP – YOUR PARISH NEEDS YOU OPEN MEETING -THIS SUNDAY 15 MAY – 7.00PM ST JOHN'S HALL – ALL WELCOME

Pope Francis has emphasised the contribution of all members of the Church in shaping our direction in the future. We want to continue that emphasis as we reflect on the significance for our life locally of what has come to the surface so far – this is about the whole community's engagement.

On Sunday night - 15 May - we have a 2-Parish Evening Open Meeting from 7 to 9.30 pm in St John's Hall. We now have a wealth of ideas, reflections and heartfelt responses as a result of the tremendous engagement in the synod process from both parishes. This came in different forms including the 268 questionnaires that folk completed on paper or online, and the post-it notes filled in at the 11 synodality meetings. We also have comments from friends in other churches in Portobello as well as the results of a questionnaire to senior pupils at Holyrood High School. **All the material from questionnaires and meetings will be on display in the hall, along with information about what is already going on in the parishes.** The event will be organised so that people are able to look at and

absorb the range of thoughts, feelings, hopes and visions that have been expressed. We will give time to reflection, listening and sharing in small groups along with prayerful silence. By the end of the evening, we hope that together we will have 'discerned' a way forward for our parishes as we look to the future. And at the end of the evening, we will have a Party with good things to eat and drink.

The experience so far has confirmed that everyone has something important to say. Please do come along this Sunday evening.

TWO EVENINGS OF DIALOGUE AND SHARING WITH OUR FIRST COMMUNION AND CONFIRMATION PARENTS

Monday 16 May and Monday 23 May, 7pm-8.30pm – St John's Hall

An Invitation to the parents from Fr Jock and the Sacramental Preparation Teams and their Co-ordinators, Arlene Lauder and Bronagh Power.

'We hope that many of you are already aware of our plans to hold some parents' evenings in advance of the First Communion and Confirmation ceremonies, as an essential part of the preparation for our celebration of these sacraments

We want to offer an opportunity for you to get to meet with each other and to share some thoughts and ideas on supporting one another with these important milestones in the children's and your lives and 'faith journeys', and indeed, beyond.

We're offering two evenings on **Monday 16 May** and **Monday 23 May, 7-8.30pm**. These are parents only evenings.

We only require you to attend one of the evenings. We plan to open the session with some wine/soft drink and nibbles and would be grateful if for catering purposes, you can let us know in advance which evening you'd prefer to attend – RSVP to the school or to our Administrator, Enrico, at stjohnsandsmarymagdalenes@gmail.com

We look forward to meeting you all in the next few weeks.'

THIS WEEK

Saturday 14 May – Feast of St Matthias

12 midday-4pm – Duddingston Kirk Hall - **Sale of pre-loved accessories** (Hats, scarves, belts, handbags and jewellery) Teas and coffees available. **Proceeds will go to Dr Neil's Garden Charity**

6.30pm – St John's – **Vigil Mass** - livestreamed

Sunday 15 May – FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

9.30am – St John's – **Mass** – livestreamed - **with baptism of Oran Kinsella-Stevenson**

11.15am – St Mary Magdalene's – **Mass**

7.00pm – St John's Hall – SYNODAL OPEN MEETING FOR THE TWO PARISHES

Monday 16 May

10.00am - St John's – **Mass** – livestreamed

12.45pm – St Mary's Cathedral – **Requiem Mass for Christine Burns**

7.00pm – St John's Hall - **Meeting for Confirmation and First Communion Parents**

8.15pm–9.15pm – Zoom – **Gospel sharing**, just click [HERE](#) for a gentle chat on this Sunday's readings

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83746295038?pwd=ditEdGhPRHU2bWdNOEVHTmFvdzdWUT09>

Tuesday 17 May

10.00am – St John's – **Requiem Mass for Nessie Cairns** - livestreamed

7.45pm – Parish House – **RCIA Group Meeting**

Wednesday 18 May - 10.00am – St John’s – Mass – livestreamed

Thursday 19 May

10.00am – St Mary Magdalene’s – **Mass** – livestreamed

7.00pm – St Mary Magdalene’s – **Reconciliation Service for First Communicants**

Friday 20 May

9.15am-9.50am – St John’s – **Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament**

10.00am - St John’s – **Mass** – livestreamed

5.00pm – Parish House – **Meeting of Fr Jock with Imam Hassan Rabbani**

Saturday 21 May - 6.30pm – St John’s – Vigil Mass - livestreamed

Sunday 22 May – SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

9.30am – St John’s – **Mass** – livestreamed

11.15am – St Mary Magdalene’s – **Mass**

IN THE COMING WEEKS

Monday 23 May – 7pm – St John’s Hall - **Meeting for Confirmation and First Communion Parents**

Tuesday 24 May - 10.30am – St John’s – **Requiem Mass for Michael Hunter**

Sunday 29 May (NB Correction of Date) – 7.30pm St Martin’s, Magdalene Drive – Rob Halligan in Concert

- Rob Halligan is an acclaimed Christian singer, songwriter and recording artist from Coventry

(<https://robhalligan.co.uk/main/>) - His concerts are a mix of great songs and personal testimony and he has built up a loyal following over the years, including here in Scotland. Tickets are £7 each and all the money will go to Rob to support him in his ministry. Tickets are available by emailing tickets@billwishart.org.uk or by popping into St. Martin’s between 10.30am and 12 noon, this is our free Community Café.’

NOTICEBOARD

Our Prayers are with our parish pilgrims – Maria Igoe, Joyce Martin and Bernadette Gallagher in Medjugorje for a fortnight with five others from other parishes, while **Phyllis McLeay returns on Sunday** on the Jumbulance from **Lourdes** (after her 61st pilgrimage on it – and her 71st Jumbulance trip overall....)

The Pamoja fashion team would like to thank all who supported them last Saturday; the total amount raised was £ 450.00.

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK 15-21 May 2022

A message from Christian Aid: ‘For the first time in a generation, global poverty is rising. Covid-19, conflict, and the climate crisis are pushing more of our global neighbours into a struggle for survival. For Jessica, a loving mum in Zimbabwe, drought means every day is a struggle for survival. Like many women, she toils on her farm, but no food can grow on her ashen dry land. She shares her heartbreak: *‘My children crave a decent meal, but I can’t provide. We often go to bed on an empty stomach. It pains me to send them to bed hungry.’* Together, we can make a real difference to families just like Jessica’s. With support from Christian Aid partners Jessica can learn how to sow drought tolerant crops and how to grow food in dry seasons. She could build a storeroom to preserve food and bounce back from future droughts.

To support Christian Aid Week in 2022, the Portobello and Area CA Group has set up a Just Giving page for donations to go directly to this year’s Appeal. If you are able to support Christian Aid to help mums like Jessica provide food for her family, please donate through our Just Giving page below. Thank you from the Portobello and Area CA Group. Your generosity is much appreciated.’

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/portobello-ca-group-or2457992>

A message from the J&P Group - Sunflower Scotland – Help for the Ukraine

Sunflower Scotland has already sent over 100 tonnes of aid directly from Edinburgh to cities in Ukraine. The charity was organised by Scottish volunteers with families in Ukraine. They are sons & daughters helping cousins, mothers, grandparents, nieces and nephews. Sunflower’s point of difference is that they send aid to the towns in Eastern Ukraine, rather than to Poland. Since Sunflower is a Volunteer Association, there are no admin fees. All donations are used either to fuel the lorries, or to buy food.

For their next lorry – bound for Odessa, Mykolaiv, Dnipro and Kharkiv - they are now collecting MOBILITY AIDS. They will deliver our donations to Ukrainian hospitals and help people to be able to walk and recover from their injuries. The items they are looking for are:

Mobility Aids - Used or new for adults or children	Other
Crutches	dry food (flour, rice, pasta, soups, tinned fish and meat)
Zimmer Frames - Walking Frames	
Walking sticks	ready meals
Strolley trolley with brakes - any type	
Rollators	
Tri/four walkers with basket	tea/ coffee/instant dry milk
Post Op shoe/wedge shoe/ortho wedge shoe	baby formula
Splints etc	nappies
First Aids Kits bandages, cotton bolls, Tourniquets, any type of dressing/tubifex/cast rolls etc.	toiletries
Must be new and unopened	Sleeping bags

They **do not accept** any clothes, toys, shoes, blankets, towels. Donations can be handed in to: Links Rd Garage, Port Seton EH32 0DU every day between 6am-10pm
DLS Dry Cleaning, Mayfield Industrial Estate, Dalkeith EH22 4AD Mon–Fri 10am–2pm.
(or leave them at the back of either church, and the J&P Group will pass them on). Thank you.

Safeguarding Induction Training – Part One

Duration: approx 90 mins online

This Friday – 20 May at 7pm with Margaret Andow

To register, email margaret_andow@outlook.com, providing details of your name, parish and role.

Edinburgh Marathon – an Appeal from St John’s Primary School

Gillian Ramage writes: ‘Would anyone like to help St John’s school in running a **water station at the Marathon on 29 May?** We are short of a few adult volunteers, we only need a few hours in the morning between 8 and 11; if anyone could help, please email me (gilliancorrigan123@hotmail.com) your contact details and I can talk you through what’s needed. It will be fun and a great opportunity to support the school. Pray we get the people needed as if we run this well, we can have this opportunity every year to raise funds for the School. Thank you.’

Zoom meetings are just modern seances



“There’s someone who wants to join us”

“Elizabeth, are you there?”

“We can’t hear you”

“Can you hear us?”



“Doesn’t matter what I think. Let’s see what Twitter has to say ...”

A Thank you from Emma Wood after the recent Film Night

STEKAskills and Queen Margaret University wishes to extend a HUGE vote of thanks to St John's for hosting our film night fundraiser last week and to the congregations of both St John's and St Mary Magdalene's for turning out to support the event. We were thrilled by the vibrant atmosphere and inspired by seeing the church communities welcoming in the Queen Margaret and wider Portobello communities in such a warm and positive way. It was an ambitious event (exhibiting the work of two artists and hosting an animation workshop in addition to showcasing Walid Salhab's films) and we have had very many messages of support from the audience. We really do appreciate the extremely hard work that goes on behind the scenes to support something like this and don't take it at all for granted.

We are delighted then that we smashed all expectations and raised enough money to fund the development of our media centre at the STEKAskills Vocational skills centre in Malawi. Please follow us on social media or at www.stekaskills.com to keep up with our progress.

From Archbishop Leo's Weekly 'Ad Clerum'

SCIAF Ukraine Appeal - As well as your prayers, please consider supporting SCIAF's emergency appeal for Ukraine, if you are able. Donations can be made at <https://www.sciaf.org.uk/> To find out how the Catholic Church is helping those in Ukraine see <https://www.caritas.org/>

Open Evening (online) - MA in Applied Catholic Theology - Find out all about the MA in Applied Catholic Theology offered by St Mary's University at its Gillis Centre Campus at an online open evening **this Tuesday 17 May**, 6-7pm. Register at bit.ly/smu_openevening

Mass for Married/Engaged Couples - Archbishop Leo will celebrate a Mass for Married & Engaged Couples **this Wednesday 18 May** at 7pm at St Mary's Cathedral in Edinburgh. All married and engaged couples are welcome.

New Dawn event - New Dawn in Scotland host a day-long spiritual event at St Mary's Church, Upper Bridge Street, Stirling **this Saturday 21 May**. It includes Holy Mass, Confessions, Testimonies, Workshops, a healing service and more. No registration required, just turn up on the day. More details at www.newdawninscotland.com

National Prayer Breakfast - Join Archbishop Cushley and Christians from across Scotland at the National Prayer Breakfast on **Wednesday 1 June** at Prestonfield House, Edinburgh. Tickets available at <https://www.npbscotland.org.uk/>

Queen's Jubilee Celebration - Archbishop Leo will celebrate a special Mass of Thanksgiving at Noon on **Sunday 5 June** to mark the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty the Queen. This will be a lovely and joyful celebration and will finish with a champagne reception after the Mass. All welcome.

Job vacancy: Bookshop Manager - A full-time Bookshop Manager is sought to setup and manage the St Paul's Bookshop at St Mary's Catholic Cathedral, Edinburgh. Salary: £20,384. Full job description at bit.ly/STPB-Manager. To apply, please submit your CV and a covering letter outlining your relevant experience and suitability for the role to morag@forthhr.co.uk by 5pm, Friday 27 May.

World Meeting of Families - This is a big event taking place in Rome **26-29 June** to celebrate the role of the family in the Church and wider society. Pope Francis has written about the importance of family in his encyclical Amoris Laetitia (The Joy of Love). Want to know more? The Archdiocese has posted three talks on its YouTube channel. View the playlist at bit.ly/ArchFamily2022

Lourdes - If you're a nurse, please consider taking part in the Archdiocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes **8-15 July**. **The pilgrimage committee is looking for a night nurse** (full funding available) and nurses to join to join the medical team. Contact Claire Banks, chief nurse, on 07930 928489 for more info. There is also still space for assisted pilgrims who will have 24hr care on the pilgrimage. Helpers and hotel pilgrims are also welcome. More info at www.edinburgh-lourdes.com

A REFLECTION ON THE GOSPEL FOR THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER - John 13:31-35

(The author of this reflection is a friend of Fr Jock who lives in Northumberland)

I was talking on Thursday morning to an old friend. We first met several years ago and stay in regular contact. It had been a while since we had last spoken – and there was much on which to catch up. During part of the conversation, we talked about the recent State re-opening of Parliament. She had missed it on TV. I told her of the sight of the Rolls Royce Phantom VI gliding down the Mall – for all Rolls Royces glide - carrying nothing except the Imperial State Crown accompanied by bodyguard in full dress livery. A second limousine carried Prince Charles and Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall. It was quite a ridiculous sight – straight out of a Monty Python comedy sketch. I wondered out loud and said: *Who on earth thought that this would be a good look in the present financial climate?* Tone deaf didn't come near. Appearance is important but it's a fine line between inspiring and scandalous. I prefer to see my cardiologist suited, or in scrubs rather than a decorator's overall (with apologies if any decorator is offended by this remark!) I was now on a roll, and we moved seamlessly to talking of the forthcoming Jubilee celebrations. I took a deep breath and nervously suggested: *I think it would be a tremendous act of witness if, instead of cancelling this appearance, and that one, she was to go about things in an electric mobility scooter. Many 90-year-olds use them – it's not unusual.* If I expected a response of *'That's a preposterous idea'*, then I was to be surprised. *'I totally agree with you. It would also focus attention on access for those with limited mobility.'* Any scooter would need to be appropriately decorous but not so heavy as to flatten the battery after a couple of hundred yards! It set me thinking that appearances can not only be deceptive, but fear of appearances or what we might describe as: *'Giving the wrong impression'*, can leave us emasculated and impotent. As Franklin D Roosevelt famously said: *'The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.'*

This weekend's Gospel sees Jesus addressing his disciples in the seconds immediately after Judas has left the room. The problem with these passages given to us at a Sunday Mass, is that we aren't always aware of the context. Despite the protests, Jesus has just washed the feet of his disciples. He insisted on doing it, of giving this witness, even though some of them were reluctant to allow him free rein. He did so, fully aware of Judas' chosen direction of travel. When the dust of the trial, crucifixion and resurrection had all settled, the disciples would remember. *'How on earth could Judas have done that? He was one of us. How did we get him so wrong? What on earth was he thinking? Jesus nevertheless insisted on washing his feet along with those of the other disciples. John the evangelist tells us: When Judas had gone, Jesus said: now has the Son of Man been glorified, and in him, God has been glorified.* What is meant by this talk of glorification? Jesus is about to leave his commandment *'to love'*. We're getting down to the nub of the issue. It's easy to love those with whom we are in love – it is much more difficult to love those who hurt us, those who betray us, those who want to take advantage of our kindness, those who have nothing to give in return. It will always be difficult for a mother to love the son she bore when he steals from her to feed his addiction.

The washing of the feet is as crucial to Jesus' witness as is the bearing of his cross. It's the whole of his life that helps the disciples, and us, to make sense of things. The washing of the feet and the bearing of his cross authenticate the command: *love one another just as I have loved you.* Some will have been bewildered by Judas' exit. Some hours later, they would be aware exactly where it was that he went. Bewilderment would turn to pain and anger. Jesus' words ring in their ears: *Love one another, just as I have loved you.* They saw his example, and they appreciated the size of the task that lay ahead

None of us wants to appear vulnerable. There is nothing more likely to create a feeling of vulnerability than the realisation that we have been taken for a ride. Vulnerability and weakness are easy bedfellows. None of us enjoys appearing weak, we don't want people to laugh at us. And yet, this is what the command to love unconditionally demands. To love those who don't love us in return; to love those who don't appreciate our efforts. Is this fear of perceived vulnerability behind the reluctance of the royal courtiers to organise a scooter for the Queen? For the true disciple of Jesus there is no option but to appear weak. In weakness is our strength. For in weakness, ego takes second place to those who need our love. When we love those whom it's difficult to love, then God's glory shines through our witness *and in us, God is glorified.*

Warm birthday greetings to Rose Thornton, 90, today, Sunday 15 May

<p><i>Please pray for those who have died recently:</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>John Norman</i> <i>Revd Fabriano Jose' Soares</i></p> <p><i>Please pray for those whose anniversaries occur around this time:</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Mgr Tony Duffy - Harry Haston - Bill Hunter - Fr Tommy Greenan - Christine Pugh - Cillian Dempsey - Jamie Clark - Fr Norman Cooper - Brendan Boyle - Catherine Hall - Gordon Campbell</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Anniversaries:</p> <p>St John's: May 15: Harry Haston (2021); James Kelly (2004); John O'Brien (1954); May 16: Maureen Collie (2018); Bill Hunter (2017); John Rooney (1984); Vincent Rowley (1981); Sarah Taylor (1981); Mary Anne McGrory (1947); Philip Haslett; May 17: Christine Pugh (2013); Cillian Dempsey (2005); Mary (Thomson) Macnamara (1996); Joseph Passmore (1963); May 18: Fr. Tommy Greenan (2020); Julia Young (1984); May 19: Alex. Hunter (2019); John Cook (2003); Catherine Cunningham (2003); Zelinda Tesoro (1992); Elizabeth Bryce (1986); May 20: Margaret Macmillan (2008); Fr. Norman Cooper (1996); May 21: Lindsay Gordon (2013); Catherine Brock (2009); Mary Meagher; Patrick O'Flaherty; May 22: Harry McKenna (1988); Archbishop Andrew J Macdonald (1950); St Mary Magdalene's: May 16: Ian Graham (2003); Joseph Flynn (1974); Catherine Tough (1970); May 19: Patrick McGuinness (1971); Frank Finnegan (1967); May 22: Fraser R Morrison (1993);</p>
<p><i>Please pray for those Parishioners who are sick:</i></p> <p>St. John's: John Cregan, Mike and Maria Noonan, Baby Archie Williams, John Whyte, Maureen Lawrie, Susan Cammack, Maria Pacitti, Kim O'Neill, Sheila Service, Frances Connelly, 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, young Saoirse Golden, Frances Cunningham, David Reid, Charlotte McGregor, Betty Dougal, Anne Thomson, Sarah McManus, Mike Burns, Sr Jennifer Lindsay, Maureen Low, Mary Slight, Rose Thornton, Kitty Dykes, Norman Telfer, Kathie Gallagher, Erin Corbett, Roz Byers, Marie Angela Crolla and Lorraine Syme.</p> <p>St Mary Magdalene's: Mary McGovern (jnr), Ray Donnelly, Carolynne McCann, Maureen Forsyth, Tom Bauld, Sam Burns, 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.</p>	<p><i>Please pray for sick friends and relatives of our Parishioners:</i></p> <p>Sheila White, Michael Durkin, Jessica Haggerty, Lauren Sutherland, Margaret Thomson, Charlotte O'Brien, Gwen Cullimore, Len Kirkland, Anne-Marie Pymont, John Francis Harwood-Stevenson, Jaroslav Icina, Young Martha Moyes (aged 5), Bill Henderson, Kit McCormick, Anne Rose, Jennifer Kay, Margaret Troupe, Anne Lauder, Seval Kazimoglu, Veronica Telfer, Ann Watt (Mgr Rae's sister) Jan Meise, Margaret Thompson, Melanie Ford, Mary Taygarth, young Niamh McDougall, Bridget Bonner, Roger Bromley, Bernard Traynor, Mary Thomson, Fr Raymond OCSO, Tony Rigg, Jozefine O'Connell, Robin Butler, Henrietta Fraser, Stuart Falconer, Nan Doig, Claire Johnston, Elizabeth, Baby Percy Keiran McShane, Colin Sandham, Lewis White, 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, Dani Miniette, Peter Millar, Sr May Lewis, Joan Murray Hamilton, Sr Margaret Mary, Jean Nelson, Betty Blyth, Lauren Fitzpatrick, Michael Igoe, baby Kinsley McMillan, 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.</p>

Offertory 8 May 2022

<i>St Mary Magdalene</i>	<i>St John the Evangelist</i>
<p>£278.42 total including Offertory of £163.42 and Gift Aid of £115.00</p>	<p>£1489.39 total including Offertory of £417.99, Gift Aid of £332.40 and online donations of £739.00</p>
<p>*** Special Collection for the Ecclesiastical Students' Fund ***</p>	
£130.00	£377.70



SAINT OF THE WEEK - ST JOSEPHINE BAKHITA – 17 MAY

Ex-Slave and Nun (1869-1947)

*"Seeing the sun, the moon, and the stars, I said to myself: Who could be the Master of these beautiful things?
And I felt a great desire to see him, to know him, and to pay him homage."*



Among the distinctive features of the pontificate of John Paul II was his keen interest in enlarging the field of canonized saints. In his first eighteen years as pope he canonized and beatified nearly a thousand saints more than in the several previous centuries since the Council of Trent. Apart from his belief in the teaching value of holy lives, he was particularly interested in recognizing "local saints" - persons whose lives bear a special meaning for the churches he made a point of visiting around the world. Typical of these new saints was Sister Josephine Bakhita of Sudan, beatified on May 17, 1992.

Bakhita ("the fortunate one") was born in a village in the southern Sudan in 1869. When she was nine she was kidnapped and sold into slavery. Transferred from one master to another over a period of years, she experienced brutality in many forms. A turning point came in 1883 when she was sold to an Italian family who treated her with

relative kindness and brought her back to Italy to work as a maid and nursemaid to their baby, Mimmina. Bakhita became devoted to the child. When Mimmina was old enough to be sent to a boarding school in Venice Bakhita accompanied her. The school was run by the Daughters of Charity, or "Canossian Sisters." It was there that Bakhita first heard the gospel and divined that it was God's will that she be free.

When, after nine months, Bakhita's mistress announced that they were returning to the Sudan, Bakhita expressed her intention to remain. The Signora professed to be hurt. Hadn't they always treated her as a member of the family? How could she now be so ungrateful? As difficult as it was to resist these entreaties, Bakhita remained firm in her resolution: "I am sure the Lord gave me strength at that moment," she later wrote, "because he wanted me for himself alone."

When pleading did not work the Signora tried another tack: she sued in court for the return of her "property." But the superior of the Canossian Sisters and the cardinal of Venice intervened and came to her defense. It was only thus that Bakhita discovered what no one had bothered to inform her, namely, that slavery was illegal in Italy. She had been free all along.

And so Bakhita remained in Italy. On January 9, 1890, she was baptized, taking the name Josephine Bakhita. By this time she heard "more and more clearly the gentle voice of the Lord from the bottom of my heart, urging me to consecrate myself to God." She was accepted into the novitiate of the congregation that had sheltered her. Finally, in 1896 she made her religious vows.

Sister Josephine lived to the age of seventy-eight. She spent her life in simple tasks, cooking, sewing, serving as sacristan and doorkeeper. No work was unimportant when performed for "the Master" - her favorite word for God. She became famous for her quiet faith and the care she brought to assignments big and small. It was said that she had a gift for making the ordinary extraordinary. To those Sisters who were schoolteachers she said, "You teach catechism; I will stay in the chapel to pray for you that you may teach well."

She lived on through World War I and then World War II. By this time her reputation for holiness was so widespread in the town of Schio where she lived that she was invoked as a protection against falling bombs. She had assured the people that no bomb would damage the town, a promise that was fulfilled.

In her last years she became ill and could not leave her wheelchair. When a visiting bishop asked her what she did all day in her wheelchair, she replied, "What do I do? Exactly what you are doing the will of God." Sister Josephine Bakhita died on February 8, 1947. She was canonized in 2000, the first native of the Sudan to be so recognized.

See: Alicia von Stamwitz, "Blessed Josephine Bakhita: Woman of Faith and Forgiveness," Liguorian (February 1993)