

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: Enrico Fertini

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

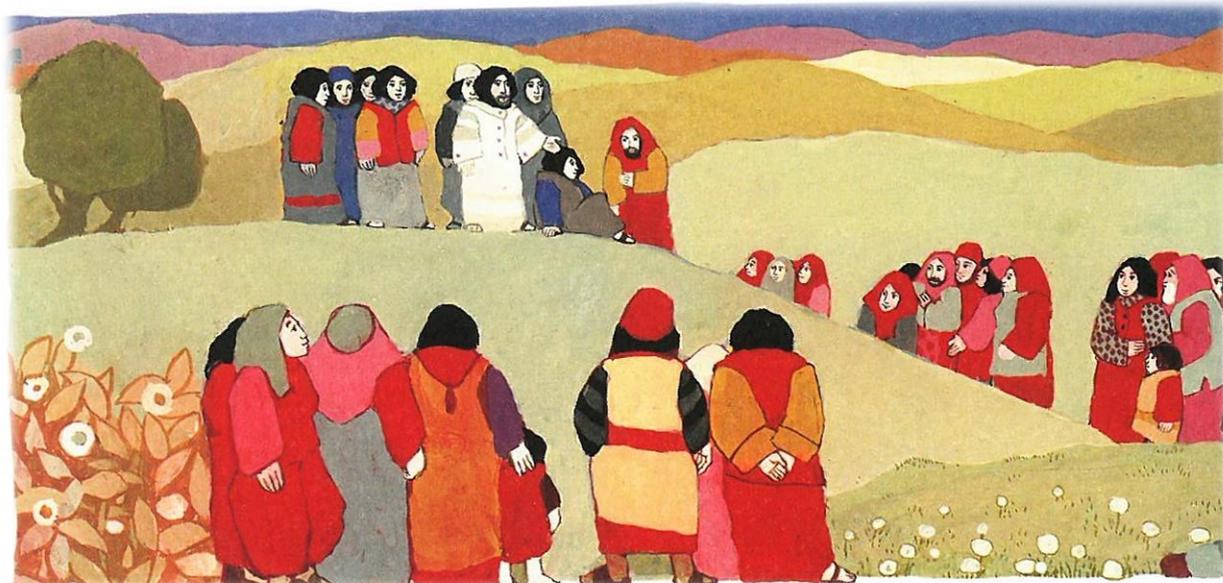
Web address: www.stjohnsportobello.co.uk

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

Seventeenth Sunday of the Year 24 July 2022



From today's Gospel: 'Lord, teach us to pray', so he said to them: 'Father, may your name be held holy, your kingdom come; give us each day our daily bread, and forgive our sins, for we ourselves forgive each one who is in debt to us. And do not put us to test' (Luke 11:2-4)

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

Today, Sunday 24 July, is World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly (as 25th July is the Feast of St Joachim and St Anne, the grandparents of Jesus). 9.30am Mass will be dedicated to grandparents to show gratitude for their gifts and contribution to parish and family life. We warmly invite all grandparents and the elderly to join us for this special Mass.

Next Sunday, 31 July, the 11.15am Mass at St Mary Magdalene's will be a Children's Mass.

New Every Sunday on BBC Radio Scotland at 7.30am

For the next 4 Sundays (24 and 31 July, 7 and 14 August), this weekly Radio Scotland religious service will feature Fr Jock, Alice Codling and Anne Jabir. The theme of the four homilies are as follows:

Sun 24 July – St Paul - and the difference between genuine people and respectful people
Sun 31 July – St Mary Magdalene and the idea of what it means to be holy
Sun 7 Aug – The Feeding of the Five Thousand and a reflection on a pilgrimage to Lourdes.
Sun 14th Aug – Jesus, the parable of the debtors and Rosie, an inspiring pilgrim.

Saturday 23 July – Feast of St Bridget of Sweden

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

Sunday 24 July – 17th Sunday of the Year

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

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

Monday 25 July – FEAST OF ST JAMES

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

7.00pm – Parish House – **St John’s Pastoral Council Meeting**

8.00pm-9.15pm – Zoom - **Gospel Sharing** - shorturl.at/jXY12

Tuesday 26 July – 10.00am – St John’s – Mass - livestreamed

Wednesday 27 July - 10.00am – St John’s – Mass – livestreamed

Thursday 28 July - 10.00am – St Mary Magdalene’s – Mass - livestreamed

Friday 29 July

9.20am-9.50am – St John’s - **Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament**

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

Saturday 30 July

12.30 – St John’s – **Baptism of Ellis McGreavy**

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

Sunday 31 July – 18th Sunday of the Year

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

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

**T
H
I
S

W
E
E
K**

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/>

Free2Pray - The Scottish Parliament is considering a Bill which would ban peaceful prayers and offers of help near abortion clinics. Catholics concerned for freedom of speech and right of assembly are asked to respond to this proposed Bill. The Archdiocese is hosting an online session to help you do this. Free2Pray takes place on Zoom and lasts 30 mins. Tuesday 2 August 7:45pm: bit.ly/freetoprayaugust

Youth Pilgrimage - The National Pilgrimage for young people aged between 16-30 takes place on Saturday 24 September in Dunkeld, Perthshire. It includes walks to holy sites, talks and Mass. A bus will leave from the Gillis Centre, 100 Strathearn Road, Edinburgh at 9:30am (£10). To book your place email yi@staned.org.uk.

MA in Applied Catholic Theology - apply now for the MA in Applied Catholic Theology. It is being offered by St Mary’s University in partnership with the Archdiocese of St Andrews & Edinburgh, at the Gillis Centre in Edinburgh, beginning in September. Teaching is flexible and the programme is suitable for graduates of most academic disciplines. Find out more at www.stmarys.ac.uk/edinburgh

NOTICEBOARD

A Message from Bethany Christian Trust - Can you help to give kids a break?

This summer we've been raising funds to send children on daytrips and holidays to help them have a break from the realities of living with the threat of homelessness. We still need your help to reach our target this summer. Can you help to give kids a break?

Thank you to everyone who has donated so far. You've helped us raise £7,800 and the first holidays have already taken place, but we still have more to raise. By supporting Give Kids a Break you will give children a holiday or day trip to places like Fort William and Lendrick Muir. They will be able to enjoy activities like camping, hiking, archery, horse riding, canoeing, high-rope climbing, treasure hunts and team building activities. The children who enjoy these breaks wouldn't be able to go on a holiday otherwise.

"It made her smile and laugh again, and it was a joy to see all the kids carefree. It was a peaceful trip, good to get away from the city and into the countryside."

(Colin about the trip he and his daughter came on last year).

We're also providing ongoing counselling as well as employability training to some of the older kids. This is vital if we want to help them to process their home situations, break the cycle of homelessness and find stable employment upon leaving school.

We believe that every child deserves to experience joy and adventure during their childhood. Join with us to give these kids a break— please donate to our appeal at

<https://www.bethanychristiantrust.com/support-work/give-kids-a-break-22>

SAINT OF THE WEEK – MECHTHILD OF MAGDEBURG

Beguine Mystic (1210?-1282?) - Feast Day – Friday 22 July

"Fish cannot drown in water, birds cannot sink in air, gold cannot perish in the refiner's fire.

This has God given to all creatures, to foster and seek their own nature. How then can I withstand mine?"

Mechthild of Magdeburg, a German mystic of the thirteenth century, is known to us entirely through her book, *The Flowing Light of the Godhead*. Written in her own hand in the vernacular dialect of her native Saxony, her book is a kind of spiritual journal, a work in progress, to which she continuously returned, adding and amending, over the course of her life.

Mechthild was evidently born of a wealthy family somewhere near the town of Magdeburg in Saxony. At the age of twelve she received a mystical vision, the first of a series of "greetings of God" that would continue daily for the rest of her life. She later described the effects of such visitations: *"The true greeting of God, which comes from the heavenly flood out of the spring of the flowing Trinity, has such power that it takes all strength from the body and lays the soul bare to itself. Thus, it sees itself as one of the blessed and receives in itself divine glory."*

Around the age of twenty Mechthild decided to leave her family and travel to Magdeburg, where she knew virtually no one. Rather than enter a convent she joined a household of Beguines. The Beguines were a movement of women who tried to fashion an independent religious life, without rules or enclosure or ecclesiastical approval. They flourished in the Low Countries and Germany in the thirteenth century and provided an attractive haven for religious visionaries like Mechthild.

Virtually nothing is known of how Mechthild spent her many years in the Beguinage, though it may be supposed that like other members of the community she passed her days in prayer, simple labour, and service to the poor. All the while she left a written trail of her inner spiritual journey. Her book combines a number of genres - mystical love poems describing the soul's communion with God, dialogues with Christ, as well as vivid accounts of her visions of paradise, hell, and the destiny of all creatures.

Among other things, Mechthild's book discloses her gift for gentle spiritual direction:

What hinders spiritual people most of all from complete perfection is that they pay so little attention to small sins. I tell you in truth: when I hold back a smile which would harm no one or have a sourness in my heart which I tell no one, or feel some impatience with my own pain, then my soul becomes so dark...and my heart so cold that I must weep greatly and lament pitifully and yearn greatly and humbly confess all my lack of virtue.



At the same time Mechthild turned a critical eye on what she termed "poor Christianity." *"I, poor woman, was so bold in my prayer that I impudently took corrupt Christianity into the arms of my soul and lifted it in lamentation."*

Sections of Mechthild's book were copied and circulated widely, apparently winning her a loyal following. At the same time her writings invited criticism from those she called "my pharisees." So vehement were her detractors that she described herself as *"a post or target at which people throw stones."* She was in turn unsparing in her criticism of ecclesial worldliness and corruption:

Alas! Crown of holy Church how tarnished you have become. Your precious stones have fallen from you because you are weak, and you disgrace the holy Christian faith.... Alas, crown of holy priesthood, you have disappeared, and you have nothing left but your external shape namely, priestly power with this you do battle against God and His chosen friends.... For our Lord speaks thus: I will touch the heart of the pope in Rome with great sadness and in this sadness I will speak to him and lament to him that My shepherds from Jerusalem have become murderers and wolves.

These were, to say the least, risky sentiments. While the Beguines afforded a certain liberty, they also provided little protection. It is therefore not surprising to learn that Mechthild eventually left her community. Sometime around 1270 she settled in the Cistercian convent at Helfta. She was by this time ill and virtually blind. Nevertheless, in that extraordinary community, which already included two other mystics, Mechthild of Hackeborn and St. Gertrude of Helfta, she was apparently welcomed and cared for until her death.

Mechthild's life of intimacy with God brought with it much loneliness and estrangement from the world. She accepted the price along with the rewards of her vocation:

*Ever longing in the soul,
Ever suffering in the body,
Ever pain in the senses....
Those who have given themselves utterly to God
Know well what I mean.*

But for one who remained faithful, suffering was not the last word.

*See there within the flesh
Like a bright wick englazed
The soul God's finger lit
To give her liberty,
And joy and power and love,
To make her crystal, like
As maybe, to Himself.*

ROTAS

THE ROTA IS ONE OF THE CENTRAL INSTITUTIONS OF THE CHURCH. WITHOUT THEM VERY LITTLE WOULD HAPPEN

WE STILL NEED PEOPLE FOR THESE ROTAS. PLEASE SIGN UP AT YOUR EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY

FLOWER ROTA
4
11
18
25

COFFEE ROTA
4
11
18
25

CLEANING ROTA
9
11
18
25

SIDESMANS ROTA
9
11
18
25

I AM SORRY BUT THESE ROTAS ARE COMPLETELY FILLED. TRY AGAIN NEXT YEAR PERHAPS

ADMIRING THE FLOWERS ROTA
9
11
18
25

DRINKING THE COFFEE ROTA
4
11
18
25

LOOKING OUT FOR WHERE THE CLEANERS MISSED A BIT ROTA
9
11
18
25

LOOKING ON FROM THE SIDELINES ROTA
4
11
18
25

A SECOND ‘SAINT’ OF THE WEEK (BUT UNCANONISED...)

VINCENT VAN GOGH - Artist - (1853-1890) – 29 July

"I think that everything that is really good and beautiful, of inward moral, spiritual, and sublime beauty in men and their works, comes from God."



In the eyes of the world, and in his own eyes, Vincent van Gogh was an utter failure. Though today he is one of the most popular and beloved of all modern painters, to his contemporaries he

evoked nothing but contempt. He sold nothing in his lifetime. He spent his life in squalid poverty, preferring to spend what money he could obtain on paint rather than food. But his failure never deterred him from dedicating every ounce of his strength to the expression of his personal vision. For the sake of that vision, as much as any desert father, he was prepared to sacrifice every natural happiness. His subjects were not formally religious. They included sunflowers, wheatfields, and starry night skies. But ultimately his subject was the holiness of existence. It was that vision and not the quality of his sacrifice that defined the religious dimension of his art.

Van Gogh was the son of a respected Dutch clergyman. Initially he too felt called to the ministry. But poor marks along with his coarse and disagreeable manners tended to alienate his professors. When he failed his Latin exams he remarked, "Do you seriously believe that such horrors are indispensable to a man who wants to do what I want to do: give peace to poor creatures and reconcile them to their existence on earth?" For van Gogh the ministry did not represent a respectable career but an opportunity to serve the poor. To do this, he decided, he needed no certificate or degree. And so he travelled to the desolate mining region of the Borinage, where he lived

in utter poverty and tried to preach the gospel to the worn and exhausted miners and their families. His efforts ended in complete failure. The result was a personal crisis that caused him to turn his back altogether on organized religion. In a break with his family, he told them he thought "*their whole system of religion horrible.*"

In 1880, at the age of twenty-seven, he turned instead to a career as an artist. This was a surprising turn but, as Henri Nouwen has observed, his vocation remained the same. Art became his way of expressing his solidarity and compassion for suffering humanity. As a preacher he had found that the images of poverty and misery among the miners turned his mind to God. And now through art he sought to record those impressions - not through traditional religious iconography, but by revealing the inner depths, the dimension of love, in which all reality was ultimately rooted.

What I want and aim at is confoundingly difficult, and yet I do not think I aim too high. I want to do drawings which *touch* some people... I want to progress so far that people will say of my work: he feels deeply, he feels tenderly.... What am I in most people's eyes? A nonentity, or an eccentric and disagreeable man... in short, the lowest of the low. Very well... then I should want my work to show what is *in the heart* of such a nobody. This is my ambition, which is, in spite of everything, founded less on anger than on love.

Though he pursued formal studies, Vincent remained obstinately committed to his own style and vision. For years he practiced drawing and sketching images of farmworkers and the poor, perfecting his technique before turning to painting. Nevertheless, he found no market for his work. His sole support came from his brother Theo, a successful art dealer in Paris. It was to Theo, his friend, his life-line to sanity, that he poured out his thoughts and feelings in thousands of letters.

There may be a great fire in our soul, but no one ever comes to warm himself at it, and the passers-by see only a little bit of smoke coming through the chimney, and pass on their way... Must one tend that inward fire... wait for the hour when someone will come and sit down near it to stay there maybe? Let him who believes in God wait for the hour that will come sooner or later.

Though he was a ravening maw for human affection and understanding, van Gogh's intensity and disregard for normal courtesy deterred intimate relationships. He alienated almost everyone with whom he came into contact. Only Theo remained constant. Meanwhile he drove his mind and body to the limit with endless work, lack of sleep, and a diet consisting of little more than bread, coffee, and alcohol. His sensitivity to suffering and the miseries of life remained acute. But there were times when he hovered dangerously on the brink of madness.

While in Paris and Antwerp he developed a new appreciation for colour. In February 1888 he moved to Arles in southern France. There in that sun-bathed countryside he achieved a fantastic breakthrough, producing scores of paintings that showed an exhilarating intoxication with light and life. "*It is as if nature starts to burn.... How beautiful is yellow!*"

His portraits too reflected a different quality - not just a sensitivity to human suffering, but also something of the sacred: "*I should like to paint in men and women something of that quality of eternity which was symbolized formerly by a halo and which we try to convey by the very radiance of our colouring.*"

But the strain of loneliness, poverty, and his own inner demons could not indefinitely be held at bay. After mutilating himself in the midst of a fit, he checked himself into a mental asylum. There he continued to paint, as much as he was able. Upon his release in May 1890 he settled in Auvers. In his last months, his output was fantastic - mostly scenes of wheatfields under stormy skies. To Theo he wrote, "*One does not expect out of life what one has already learned it cannot give, but rather one begins to see more and more clearly that life is only a kind of sowing time, and the harvest is not here.*"

On July 27, 1890, he shot himself in the stomach. When Theo heard the news he rushed to his brother's side. Vincent said, "Who could imagine that life could be so sad?" He died on July 29.



Please pray for those who have died recently:

*Inge Downey
Sr May Lewis
Patrick Raeburn*

Please pray for those whose anniversaries occur around this time:

Rosemary McDevitt - Alison Connarty - Mary Caffarkey - Erminia Notarangelo - Emma Williams - James McQuade

Anniversaries:
St John:
July 23: Bridget Whigham (2010); James Tiernan (2006); Agnes McFadyen (1999); May McPhillips (1999); Michael Tierney (1993); Dominic Knowles (1986); Elizabeth Cordery (1959); Sarah Somerville; **July 24:** Alison Connarty (2018); Mary Cafferkey (2016); Catherine Tierney (2003); Francis J Meechan (1992); **July 25:** Marie Brown (2011); James Dignan (1995); Robert Clark (1981); David Gowans (1974); James Forsyth; **July 26:** Mary Elliott (2002); Michael O'Neill (1999); Alexander Binnie Jnr. (1967); John Trower (1942); **July 27:** Peter Connolly (1998); James Cassidy; John Kelly; Helen O'Hare; **July 28:** Rosemary McDevitt (2002); Catherine Lowe (1986); **July 29:** James Casey (2019); Fr. Konrad Haller (1976); **July 30:** Charlotte Hannavy; **July 31:** Madge Freeman (2009); Baby Grace Mills (2003);

St Mary Magdalene's:
July 25: James O'Hara (1982); **July 26:** Erminia Notarangelo (2015); Richard McIntyre (1996); **July 28:** Rae Lang (2010);

Please pray for those Parishioners who are sick:

St. John's: Carol Simpson, Shay Graham (aged 5), Kathleen Brown, John Cregan, Mike Noonan, Jean Bonar, Baby Archie Williams, John Whyte, Susan Cammack, Maria Pacitti, Kim O'Neill, Sheila Service, Frances Connelly, Fiona Connel, John Freeman, May Thomson, Ann Dobie, Frank Logan, Sheelagh Dobson, Ernie Moran, Bob Kelly, 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.

St Mary Magdalene's:
Mary McGovern (jnr), Carolyne McCann, 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.

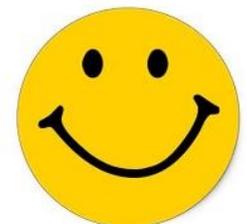
Please pray for sick friends and relatives of our Parishioners:

Angela Khan, Lorraine Kelly, Marlene Bonnar, George and Ann McDermott, Lalee Martin, Suzanne O'Callaghan, Ellen Dow, Lucille McFadden, Tara Kuppinger, Margo Law, Sheila White, Michael Durkin, Jessica Haggerty, Lauren Sutherland, Margaret Thomson, Charlotte O'Brien, Gwen Cullimore, young Martha Moyes (aged 5), Bill Henderson, Kit McCormick, Jennifer Kay, Margaret Troupe, Anne Lauder, Seval Kazimoglu, Ann Watt (Mgr Rae's sister), Jan Meise, Melanie Ford, Mary Taygarth, young Niamh McDougall, Bridget Bonner, Roger Bromley, Mary Thomson, Fr Raymond OCSO, Tony Rigg, Jozefine O'Connell, Robin Butler, Henrietta Fraser, Stuart Falconer, Nan Doig, Clare Johnston, Elizabeth, Baby Percy Keiran McShane, Colin Sandham, Elizabeth and Gordon Marron, Dawn Clarke, William Kinsley, Katie McAnenny, John Kellagher, Joy Allan, Colin Raasch, Christopher MacKinnon, Annabelle Cervantes, Emily Buchanan, Ann Thorp, baby Josh Simpson, Dani Miniette, Peter Millar, Joan Murray Hamilton, Sr Margaret Mary, Jean Nelson, Betty Blyth, Lauren Fitzpatrick, Michael Igoe, Clare Richardson, Laura Anderson, Richard Reid, James O'Rourke, Tommy Muir, James Shepherd, Peter Hanley, Andrew Franklin, Ellen Green, Jamie Mitchell, Peter Bromley, Edward Caulfield, Igor Rekowski, Diana Hibbert, Joan Brooks, Mary Turnbull and young Ray Donovan Syme.

Offertory 17 July 2022

St Mary Magdalene
£229.63 total including Offertory of £119.63 and Gift Aid of £110.00

St John the Evangelist
£1211.50 total including Offertory of £197.13, Gift Aid of £272.37 and online donations of £742.00



Thank You!

A REFLECTION ON THE GOSPEL FOR THE SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR – LUKE 11:1-13

In news bulletins this week, there has been an unprecedented use of the word *unprecedented*. In this tiny part of the world, news media and reporters have continually spoken of unprecedented heat levels, unprecedented fires, unprecedented demands on the NHS, ambulance service, and fire service. There is an unprecedented demand for food banks, unprecedented levels of child poverty. ‘How did this happen?’, our leaders cry. ‘We had no idea!’ Pull the other one! We are in a mess – a mess of unprecedented, almost apocalyptic dimensions. Our political leaders have played around while the country, economy and environment have burned. It’s quite ironic that certain political leaders clutch their pearls (it’s amazing how many male politicians wear pearls these days!) or they reach for their smelling salts whenever a protestor glues themselves to a railway carriage; then look on with their empty platitudes whenever tracks buckle in the heat and trains are prevented from operating a normal timetable. Am I a pearl-clutcher, or among those willing to speak out?

There are times in life when we each come face to face with personal tragedy or disaster never before experienced: the death of our partner, our child, our parent; a diagnosis of a terminal illness or condition; the loss of our job followed by the threat of losing our home. If we haven’t yet been there, it won’t be long before we are. We come face to face with emptiness, a yawning, aching void that tears at the very core of our being. Meaning begins to leech from our awareness and understanding; our values become threatened; and it seems that everything is called into question.

Often in desperation, we turn to prayer. *There are no atheists on a sinking ship*. We sympathise with the disciples in this weekend's Gospel: "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." They had watched John and his followers pray, and they were aware that Jesus regularly went off where he could be alone and pray. Teach us to pray. Perhaps the shine was fading, the appeal wearing thin. They were learning that discipleship involved hard work. They knew exactly where to go for new nets if they needed some. Matthew, for help with collecting taxes from a troublesome client. It had been fun when crowds fawned all over them, but now the honeymoon period was over. The longer they spent in his company, the more they became aware of their own weakness and failings. Something else was called for – hence their plea – *Lord, teach us to pray as John taught his disciples*. The starting point for us all is a recognition of who we are. I cannot add anything to God's majesty - or his power - or his beauty - or his perfection - or his immeasurable love. God is God and God is the only one who can fill our unprecedented levels of angst, pain, emptiness, and longing. This is our starting point, and it is sufficient to sit in the presence of God and one by one drive away every distraction, every erroneous thought. Then we sit and quietly await the arrival of God who will most definitely come. I speak from experience for I have faced in my own life more than a few unprecedented disaster moments. ‘Let go and Let God’ is an oft used phrase, but it is worth taking to heart. Let God be God, take the risk and make yourself take the back seat. Let go. Your first stroke when learning to swim was only possible once you had let go - either of the side of the pool or of your instructor. You can do it. Just Let Go!

Jesus’ starting point in the ‘prayer-lesson’ is the recognition of the sheer majesty of God: *Father, may your name be held holy, your kingdom come*. Every now and again we encounter commendable people. We call them saintly or admirable – but rarely holy. When we do encounter such people, we’re struck by their humility. They are people who have recognised the otherness of God – not a God who is remote, or distanced. They possess a recognition of who we are and where we are in life. The fluctuations in climate have been a lesson in humility. When nature flexes her muscles, we look on powerlessly and just have to hang on. The James Webb telescope has taught us our place – in history, and in creation. God alone remains as a stable force amidst all of the might, majesty - and the unprecedented awareness of powerlessness.

(The author of these reflections is a friend of Fr Jock living in Northumberland)