

Saints Days this Week... 19th - 26th January

TUESDAY – St. Agnes. According to tradition, Agnes was a member of the Roman nobility and raised in an early Christian family. She suffered martyrdom at the age of twelve during the reign of the Roman Emperor Diocletian. She is one of seven women who, along with the Blessed Virgin, are commemorated by name in the Canon of the Mass. Agnes is depicted in art with a lamb, from the Latin word for “lamb”, agnus. She is also shown with Martyr's palm.

FRIDAY – St. Francis de Sales, Bishop, religious founder, doctor of the Church. Born in Savoy (France), died in Lyons. As a priest and bishop of Geneva, he played a major part in the renewal of French Catholicism in the 17th century and is seen by many as an early proponent of ecumenical dialogue. With St. Jane Frances de Chantal he founded the Visitation order, and his writings promoted a spirituality for laypeople. Francis de Sales is remembered as a most influential preacher, writer and spiritual director, who combined firmness with patience and gentleness.

SATURDAY – The Conversion of St. Paul.

PARISH PRAYER GROUPS AND PRAYER TIMES

Monday Exposition & Rosary ~ St Wilfrid's, 7.30–8.30pm

St Bede's Prayer Group ~ Meets in church, Tuesday 7.30–9.00pm

Mother's Prayers ~ Coming together in each other's homes to pray for families. Further details from the Parish 01606 42440

Divine Mercy Prayer Group ~ Praying for the sick & dying.

Morning Prayer ~ Is prayed each weekday 9.05am, prior to 9.30am Mass.

Eucharistic Adoration ~ Sunday at St Wilfrid's 4.15 – 5.15pm

Exposition & Reconciliation ~ Saturday at St Wilfrid's 11.00-11.50am

Web Sites ~

Parish: www.stjohnvianney.co.uk

Catholic Church in England & Wales: www.catholicnews.org.uk

Prayer Site: www.pray-as-you-go.org

Scripture Reflection: www.wednesdayword.org

Reading the Gospel of Matthew: www.godwhospeaks.uk

Preparing to hear God's word...

**Next Sunday's Readings:
3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time Yr. A
26th January 2020**



First Reading – Isaiah’s prophetic text, promises that the Lord will move his people into the light from the darkness of the King of Assyria’s annexation of the northern kingdom of Israel.

Psalm 26 – *The Lord is my light and my help*

Second Reading – Paul calls for unity in Jesus Christ. The Corinthians are plagued by party splits. We get a hint at the divisions even in the fact that one group is reporting to Paul about everyone else. "Chloe's people," perhaps Chloe's household or perhaps those who meet for worship in Chloe's house, bring word to Paul that the church is fracturing. Each group has rallied to a particular leader, and the debate in Corinth revolves around the knowledge, power and personalities that each of these teachers embodies.

Gospel – Jesus settles in Capernaum, fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah. He preaches a message of repentance and he calls the first disciples to be ‘Fishers of men.’

Isaiah 8: 23- 9:3

In days past the Lord humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Nephthali, but in days to come he will confer glory on the Way of the Sea on the far side of Jordan, province of the nations.

The people that walked in darkness has seen a great light; on those who live in a land of deep shadow a light has shone. You have made their gladness greater, you have made their joy increase; they rejoice in your presence as men rejoice at harvest time, as men are happy when they are dividing the spoils.

For the yoke that was weighing on him, the bar across his shoulders, the rod of his oppressor, these you break as on the day of Midian.

As I settle to pray, I ask the Lord to be open to his word today.

Isaiah promises light for the people in darkness. His prophecy points to the son of King Ahaz, the future king Hezekiah. It looked as if he would fulfil all the great prophecies, but it would be Jesus who would come to truly fulfil the prophecy.

We see the text of Isaiah in our own time, when people change from darkness to live in the light of Jesus, move from the land of various enslavements such as addictions to the land of those freed by the light of Jesus. The text of Isaiah is lived out all around us today in other less dramatic ways. In some ways we are all going from darkness to light and need to move ever more from darkness to light. Sometimes people try to solve the issues in their lives by moving away from God rather than to turning to Him in prayer.

“There is darkness in human hearts, yet the light of Christ is greater still”

(Pope Francis)

Matthew 4 : 12-23

Hearing that John had been arrested Jesus went back to Galilee, and leaving Nazareth he went and settled back in Capernaum, a lakeside town on the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali. In this way the prophesy of Isaiah was to be fulfilled. Land of Zebulun! Land of Naphtali! Way of the sea on the far side of the Jordan, Galilee of the nations! The people that lived in darkness have seen a great light; on those who dwell in the land and shadow of death a light has dawned. From that moment Jesus began his preaching with the message, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.' As he was walking by the sea of Galilee he saw two brothers, Simon, who was called Peter and his brother Andrew; they were making a cast in the lake with their net, for they were fishermen. And he said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.' And they left their nets at once and followed him. Going on from there he saw another pair of brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John; they were in their boat with their brother Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. At once leaving the boat and their father, they followed him. He went round the whole of Galilee teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom and curing all kinds of disease and sickness among the people.

Our Gospel reminds us that every day we are called to build up God's kingdom, not just our own, and become fishers of men and women. When we do, to use the words of our first reading, then those 'fish' who live in darkness will see a great light, the yoke weighing on them, the bar across their shoulders will be lifted, and the rod of their oppressors will be broken.

The greatest darkness or yoke from which many need healing, is that of fear. Whilst some seek alternative sources, it is only through Jesus will we find true and complete healing, and the best way to conquer any problem is through prayer. When we believe and pray, solutions will be found or we get the strength to live with the problem, the strength to carry the cross. Even if there is darkness all around us, when we pray, we can keep the light of God in us. When we conquer problems through prayer or get the strength from prayer to continue to live through problems, then the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled in each and every one of us.

I come to my place of prayer. I gently become aware of God's presence. When I am ready, I slowly read and re-read the Gospel.

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