



NEWSLETTER
THE PARISHES OF
OUR LADY AND ST PATRICK MAESTEG
ST. ROBERT ABERKENFIG

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4th SUNDAY OF EASTER WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS
GOOD SHEPHERD SUNDAY - MESSAGE FROM FATHER EDMUND

Dearly Beloved Parishioners,

God is Good All the Time and All the Time God is Good!

Indeed, the merciful love of the Lord fills the earth; and by the Word of God the heavens and the earth were made. Whoever keeps His Word, truly the love of God is perfected in him/her.

The God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make us complete in every good work to do His will, working in each one of us what is well pleasing in His sight, through our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever.

Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. If anyone loves me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. May the word of God take root in our heart and homes.

Beloved, the Church, as a sheepfold is the body of Christ with Jesus Christ, the Word of God, as its Head and sole and necessary gateway. It is also the flock of which God himself foretold that he would be the shepherd, and whose sheep, even though governed by human shepherds, are unfailingly nourished and led by Christ himself, the Good Shepherd and Prince of Shepherds, who gave his life for his sheep (cf. CCC 754)

In the this month of May, traditionally the month of the Holy Rosary, let us intensify our prayer of the Holy Rosary, seeking the intercession of the Mother of God and Our Blessed Mother Mary, for the salvation of our World; for never was it known that anyone who fled to her for protection or implored her help was left unaided.

Furthermore, may we endeavour to recognise the voice of the Good Shepherd and guardian of our souls, by meditating on the Word of God through whom we are nourished and strengthened, that we might have life and have it abundantly.

Let us continue to be united in prayer for our good and the good of Holy Mother Church and for the salvation of all the world.

Looking forward to seeing you all again for the celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

God love you all!

Remain in God's Love and care.

Fr. Edmund

MASS INTENTIONS: Father Edmund will continue to celebrate a private Mass each day during this period. On Sundays, Father will celebrate Mass for all the People of both Parishes, NHS and FRONTLINE WORKERS/VOLUNTEERS. On other days in addition to Mass for the people he will pray for a specific intention. Due to the fact that we have now only one Mass on Sunday, Sunday intentions already received will be moved to weekdays. If you wish to submit an intention for a Mass, please do so via Parish Mobile (number above or ring Parish Secretaries), clearly stating the intention for which the Mass is to be offered and your preferred date. Father agrees to celebrate these Masses on trust and the Mass Offering can be made when things return to normal.



'The merciful love of the Lord fills the earth; by the word of the Lord the heavens were made, alleluia.' (Entrance Antiphon Fourth Sunday of Easter)



4th Sunday of Easter, 3rd May: Good Shepherd Sunday. World Day of Prayer Vacations People of the Parishes, NHS and frontline workers/volunteers.

Graham White *RIP (TW)*

Monday: 4th May: Elizabeth Bumford (99th Birthday) *RIP (R, P & A)*

Tuesday: 5th May: Gill John & John Family *RIP (A)*

Wednesday: 6th May: Matthew Morgan *RIP (L&A)*

Thanksgiving 90th Birthday Mr Ian Hutton (*Every Blessing and Congratulations*)

Thursday: 7th May: Andrew Norman *RIP (L&AR)*

Friday: 8th May: Nick Whitty *RIP (McD&f)*

Saturday: 9th May: Mary & William McBride *RIP (P/S/L)*

5th Sunday of Easter 10th May: People of our Parishes.

VOCATIONS SUNDAY:

Today, the Fourth Sunday of Easter, is known as Good Shepherd Sunday because of the Gospel reading of the day taken from St. John which speaks of Jesus as the Good Shepherd. It is also celebrated by the Church as the World Day of Prayer for Vocations to the priesthood and the religious life. Please pray this prayer during the day and throughout the week:

Loving Father, You call us by name. As we journey through life help us to be confident in our own unique identity and to find opportunities to develop our own gifts and passions. We pray that the Holy Spirit will pour on us wisdom and guidance to help us realise and follow our dreams, discerning your plan for our lives. Bless Your Church by raising up dedicated and generous people from our families and friends who will serve as Priests, Deacons, Sisters and Brothers. May we support one another in response to God's call. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Pope Francis' Message for the 2020 World Day of Prayer for Vocations, written for us to reflect on the meaning and purpose of this day:

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

On August 4th last year, the 160th anniversary of the death of the Curé of Ars, I chose to write a letter to all those priests who daily devote their lives to the service of God's people in response to the Lord's call. On that occasion, I chose four key words – pain, gratitude, encouragement and praise – as a way of thanking priests and supporting their ministry. I believe that today, on this 57th World Day of Prayer for Vocations, those words can be addressed to the whole people of God, against the backdrop of the Gospel passage that recounts for us the remarkable experience of Jesus and Peter during a stormy night on the Sea of Galilee (cf. Mt 14:22-33). After the multiplication of the loaves, which had astonished the crowds, Jesus told his disciples to get into the boat and precede him to the other shore, while he took leave of the people. The image of the disciples crossing the lake can evoke our own life's journey. Indeed, the boat of our lives slowly advances, restlessly looking for a safe haven and prepared to face the perils and promises of the sea, yet at the same time trusting that the helmsman will ultimately keep us on the right course. At times though, the boat can drift off course, misled by mirages, not the lighthouse that leads it home and be tossed by the tempests of difficulty, doubt and fear. Something similar takes place in the hearts of those who, called to follow the Teacher of Nazareth, have to undertake a crossing and abandon their own security to become the Lord's disciples. The risk involved is real: the night falls, the headwinds howl, the boat is tossed by the waves, and the fear of failure, of not being up to the call, can threaten to overwhelm them. The Gospel, however, tells us that in the midst of this challenging journey we are not alone. Like the first ray of dawn in the heart of the night, the Lord comes walking on the troubled waters to join the disciples; He invites Peter to come to him on the waves, saves him when he sees him sinking and, once in the boat, makes the winds die down. The first word of vocation, then, is gratitude. Taking the right course is not something we do on our own, nor does it depend solely on the road we choose to travel. How we find fulfilment in life is more than a decision we make as isolated individuals; above all else, it is a response to a call from on high. The Lord points out our destination on the opposite shore and He grants us the courage to board the boat. In calling us, he becomes our helmsman; He accompanies and guides us; He prevents us from running aground on the shoals of indecision and even enables us to walk on surging waters. Every vocation is born of that gaze of love with which the Lord came to meet us, perhaps even at a time when our boat was being battered by the storm. "Vocation, more than our own choice, is a response to the Lord's unmerited call" (Letter to Priests, 4 August 2019). We will succeed in discovering and embracing our vocation once we open our hearts in gratitude and perceive the passage of God in our lives. When the disciples see Jesus walking towards them on the sea, they first think that He is a ghost and are filled with fear. Jesus immediately reassures them with words that should constantly accompany our lives and our vocational journey: "Take heart, it is I; have no fear" (Mt 14:27). This, then, is the second word I wish to offer you: encouragement. What frequently hinders our journey, our growth, our choosing the road the Lord is marking out for us, are certain "ghosts" that trouble our hearts. When we are called to leave safe shores and embrace a state of life – like marriage, ministerial priesthood, consecrated life – our first reaction is often from the "ghost of disbelief". Surely, this vocation is not for me! Can this really be the right path? Is the Lord really asking me to do this? Those thoughts can keep growing – justifications and

calculations that sap our determination and leave us hesitant and powerless on the shore where we started. We think we might be wrong, not up to the challenge, or simply glimpsing a ghost to be exorcized. The Lord knows that a fundamental life choice – like marriage or special consecration to His service – calls for courage. He knows the questions, doubts and difficulties that toss the boat of our heart, and so He reassures us: “Take heart, it is I; have no fear!” We know in faith that He is present and comes to meet us, that He is ever at our side even amid stormy seas. This knowledge sets us free from that lethargy which I have called “sweet sorrow” (Letter to Priests, 4 August 2019), the interior discouragement that hold us back from experiencing the beauty of our vocation. In the Letter to Priests, I also spoke about pain, but here I would like to translate the word differently, as fatigue. Every vocation brings with it a responsibility. The Lord calls us because He wants to enable us, like Peter, to “walk on water”, in other words, to take charge of our lives and place them at the service of the Gospel, in the concrete and everyday ways that He shows us, and specifically in the different forms of lay, priestly and consecrated vocation. Yet, like Saint Peter, our desire and enthusiasm coexist with our failings and fears. If we let ourselves be daunted by the responsibilities that await us – whether in married life or priestly ministry – or by the hardships in store for us, then we will soon turn away from the gaze of Jesus and, like Peter, we will begin to sink. On the other hand, despite our frailty and poverty, faith enables us to walk towards the Risen Lord and to weather every storm. Whenever fatigue or fear make us start to sink, Jesus holds out His hand to us. He gives us the enthusiasm we need to live our vocation with joy and fervour. When Jesus at last boards the boat, the winds die down and the waves are calmed. Here we have a beautiful image of what the Lord can do at times of turbulence and tempest in our lives. He stills those winds, so that the forces of evil, fear and resignation no longer have power over us. As we live out our specific vocation, those headwinds can wear us down. Here I think of all those who have important responsibilities in civil society, spouses whom I like to refer to – not without reason – as “courageous”, and in a particular way those who have embraced the consecrated life or the priesthood. I am conscious of your hard work, the sense of isolation that can at times weigh upon your hearts, the risk of falling into a rut that can gradually make the ardent flame of our vocation die down, the burden of the uncertainty and insecurity of the times and worry about the future. Take heart, do not be afraid! Jesus is at our side, and if we acknowledge Him as the one Lord of our lives, He will stretch out his hand, take hold of us and save us. Even amid the storm-tossed waters, then, our lives become open to praise. This is the last of our vocation words, and it is an invitation to cultivate the interior disposition of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Grateful that the Lord gazed upon her, faithful amid fear and turmoil, she courageously embraced her vocation and made of her life an eternal song of praise to the Lord. Dear friends, on this day in particular, but also in the ordinary pastoral life of our communities, I ask the Church to continue to promote vocations. May she touch the hearts of the faithful and enable each of them to discover with gratitude God’s call in their lives, to find courage to say “yes” to God, to overcome all weariness through faith in Christ, and to make of their lives a song of praise for God, for their brothers and sisters and for the whole world. May the Virgin Mary accompany us and intercede for us.

Given at Saint John Lateran, Rome on March 8th, 2020, the Second Sunday of Lent.

POPE'S INTENTION FOR MAY 2020: We pray that Deacons, faithful in their service to the Word and the poor, may be an invigorating symbol for the entire Church.

HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS' LETTER TO THE FAITHFUL FOR THE MONTH OF MAY 2020:

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The month of May is approaching, a time when the People of God express with particular intensity their love and devotion for the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is traditional in this month to pray the Rosary at home within the family. The restrictions of the pandemic have made us come to appreciate all the more this “family” aspect, also from a spiritual point of view. For this reason, I want to encourage everyone to rediscover the beauty of praying the Rosary at home in the month of May. This can be done either as a group or individually; you can decide according to your own situations, making the most of both opportunities. The key to doing this is always simplicity, and it is easy also on the internet to find good models of prayers to follow. I am also providing two prayers to Our Lady that you can recite at the end of the Rosary, and that I myself will pray in the month of May, in spiritual union with all of you. I include them with this letter so that they are available to everyone. Dear brothers and sisters, contemplating the face of Christ with the heart of Mary our Mother will make us even more united as a spiritual family and will help us overcome this time of trial. I keep all of you in my prayers, especially those suffering most greatly, and I ask you, please, to pray for me. I thank you, and with great affection I send you my blessing. *Pope Francis.*

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 25 April 2020 Feast of Saint Mark the Evangelist Pope Francis

First Prayer: O Mary, You shine continuously on our journey as a sign of salvation and hope. We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick, who, at the foot of the cross, were united with Jesus' suffering, and persevered in your faith. “Protectress of the Roman people”, you know our needs, and we know that you will provide, so that, as at Cana in Galilee, joy and celebration may return after this time of trial. Help us, Mother of Divine Love, to conform ourselves to the will of the Father and to do what Jesus tells us. For he took upon himself our suffering, and burdened himself with our sorrows to bring us, through the cross, to the joy of the Resurrection. Amen. We fly to your protection, O Holy Mother of God; Do not despise our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us always from every danger, O Glorious and Blessed Virgin.

Second Prayer “We fly to your protection, O Holy Mother of God”.

In the present tragic situation, when the whole world is prey to suffering and anxiety, we fly to you, Mother of God and our Mother, and seek refuge under your protection. Virgin Mary, turn your merciful eyes towards us amid this coronavirus pandemic. Comfort those who are distraught and mourn their loved ones who have died, and at times are buried in a way that grieves them deeply. Be close to those who are concerned for their loved ones who are sick and who, in order to prevent the spread of the disease, cannot be close to them. Fill with hope those who are troubled by the uncertainty of the future and the consequences for the economy and employment. Mother of God and our Mother, pray for us to God, the Father of mercies, that this great suffering may end and that hope and peace may dawn anew. Plead with your divine Son, as you did at Cana, so that the families of the sick and the victims be comforted, and their hearts be opened to confidence and trust. Protect those doctors, nurses, health workers and volunteers who are on the frontline of this emergency, and are risking their lives to save others. Support their heroic effort and grant them strength, generosity and continued health. Be close to those who assist the sick night and day, and to priests who, in their pastoral concern

and fidelity to the Gospel, are trying to help and support everyone. Blessed Virgin, illumine the minds of men and women engaged in scientific research, that they may find effective solutions to overcome this virus. Support national leaders, that with wisdom, solicitude and generosity they may come to the aid of those lacking the basic necessities of life and may devise social and economic solutions inspired by farsightedness and solidarity. Mary Most Holy, stir our consciences, so that the enormous funds invested in developing and stockpiling arms will instead be spent on promoting effective research on how to prevent similar tragedies from occurring in the future. Beloved Mother, help us realize that we are all members of one great family and to recognize the bond that unites us, so that, in a spirit of fraternity and solidarity, we can help to alleviate countless situations of poverty and need. Make us strong in faith, persevering in service, constant in prayer. Mary, Consolation of the afflicted, embrace all your children in distress and pray that God will stretch out his all-powerful hand and free us from this terrible pandemic, so that life can serenely resume its normal course. To you, who shine on our journey as a sign of salvation and hope, do we entrust ourselves, O Clement, O Loving, O Sweet Virgin Mary. Amen.

HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS, THE SICK & DYING: Sadly because of the restrictions Priests are unable to visit the sick in hospital or at home at this time. If you have sick or dying family, please do continue to contact Father Edmund (07964366710) who will discuss the way forward.

FUNERALS: Please be advised that Priests and Deacons can only conduct a Funeral service in the Crematorium or at the graveside during this time. No Requiem Masses or services are allowed in Church. A Memorial Service for those deceased may be held later once all returns to normal.

All funerals will take place privately in line with current advice from the Welsh Assembly Government.

ETERNAL REST: Please pray for the repose of the Soul of Margaret Davies, Brian Maroney, Ronnie King (who have died recently) and for all who have died with Coronavirus. May they rest in peace and rise in Eternal Glory; our sympathies and prayers be with their families. *We continue to pray for those who have anniversaries at this time.*

To maintain and develop our faith and spiritual life, we will like to encourage all Parishioners to join in prayers and devotions in the comfort of their homes:

Please create a sacred space in your home.
Pray the Holy Rosary daily individually or as a family
Read and reflect on the daily readings of the Mass
Join the live Streaming Mass online or EWTN if you have SKY TV at Channel 588
Pray the Act of Spiritual Communion

ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the most Blessed Sacrament. I love You above all things and I desire to receive you into my soul. Since I cannot now receive You sacramentally, come at least Spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there, and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.

PRAYER FOR THIS TIME OF TRIAL: God Our Father, each person is precious to You. You are the Giver of life. Have mercy on us and protect us at this time, as the Coronavirus threatens health and life. You are an ever-present Helper in time of trouble. Watch over those who are suffering, Give strength to those who are aiding the Sick and give courage to all in this time of anxiety. Amen.

PRAYER FOR US IN THIS TIME OF NEED:

As we continue in lockdown for a further three weeks let us continue to pray for all our parishioners, for our sick and those who are working on the frontline at this time. Please also continue to pray for those suffering with Coronavirus, those who have died from the virus and plead for the end to the pandemic.

Heavenly Father, who sent the ten plagues to free his children, and protected them by the blood of the Lamb, bless all those affected by the Coronavirus. Encourage and strengthen those who seek a cure. Protect all who care or work in the NHS and FRONT LINE. Send your Holy Angels to guard us and bring us safely through this time of trial. May your Holy Mother care for us as she did for the sick child Jesus. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen. (Follow this with one Our Father, three Hail Marys) Our Lady of Lourdes. Pray for us. St. Raphael Archangel. Pray for us. St. Luke, the Physician. Pray for us. St. Bernadette. Pray for us.

POPE FRANCIS' PRAYER TO MARY DURING CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

‘O Mary You shine continuously along our journey as a sign of salvation and hope “We entrust ourselves to you. Health of the Sick, who at the Cross were near to the pain of Jesus Keeping your faith firm. “You, Salvation of the Roman people, Know what we need, and we trust that you will provide for those needs so that, as at Cana of Galilee joy and celebration may return after this moment of trial “Help us. Mother of Divine Love, to conform ourselves to the will of the father and to do what Jesus tells us, He who took our sufferings upon Himself, and took up our sorrows to bring us, through the Cross, to the joy of the resurrection. Amen. We seek refuge under your protection, O Holy Mother of God. Do not despise our pleas. We who are put to the test And deliver us from every danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin.

Resources on line – please note moved to the News and Updates section

NEWS AND UPDATES CAN BE FOUND BY CLICKING ON THE NEWS TAB AT THE TOP OF THE SCREEN ON THE WEBSITE WHERE YOU WILL SEE A “DROP DOWN MENU” WITH THE RELEVANT ARTICLES.

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ARE YOU ABLE TO SET UP A STANDING ORDER FOR YOU PARISH?

Dear Parishioners

Sincere thanks for contributing to our Parishes via Standing Orders or weekly envelopes/loose; however, due to the current circumstances with our Churches closed for public worship, weekly giving is not possible.

During this difficult time, our Parishes still have expenses that will continue to mount even though there are no public acts of worship or regular collections. Your contributions are a very important part of our parish income and are very much appreciated and it would be most helpful if you could consider giving your donations by setting up a Standing Order, if you do not already donate in this way. You can do this through your own bank by telephone, mobile or Internet banking. The details you need are contained in the form below. If you wish to complete a standing order on paper, please request a copy by contacting the Parish Secretaries; on receiving it please complete and send it to your own bank. One-off donations for example for 'Restoration or Maintenance' may also be made direct to the Parish Accounts using the appropriate sort code and account number from the forms below. I realise that these are uncertain times and that some of you may not be in a position to give as generously as you normally do.

(However, if this is something you feel you are unable to do by all means hold onto your offerings until you are next able to attend Church.)

Thank you for your generous giving. Father Edmund

To set up a standing order or Bank Transfer the details are as follows:

**Bank Name: BARCLAYS BANK PLC
CITY OF CARDIFF, BRANCH CARDIFF, CF1 1SG**

**Account Name: OUR LADY AND ST PATRICK CHURCH, MAESTEG
Sort Code: 20-18-23
Account Number: 43706869**

OR

**Account Name: ST. ROBERT CHURCH, ABERKENFIG
Sort Code: 20-18-23
Account Number: 73394867**

MARCH STANDING ORDER COLLECTIONS:

Aberkenfig £175. Maesteg £549.

STANDING ORDER MANDATE

To **Bank / Building Society ***

Address

..... **Post Code**.....

Please set up a new standing order to:

**Barclays Bank PLC,
City of Cardiff Branch,
Cardiff CF1 1SG**

Sort Code: 20-18-23

Account Name: PARISH OF OUR LADY AND ST PATRICK MAESTEG

Account No.: 43706869

Please debit my/our bank account as follows:

Account Name:

Account No.:

Sort Code:

the sum of £..... (amount in words)

starting on the..... day of (month)(year)

and on the same day every month until further notice.

Signature(s)

.....

Address

.....

..... **Post Code**

Please cancel any previous standing order in favour of the same beneficiary. This standing order supersedes all former arrangements.

Please send this form to your bank

STANDING ORDER MANDATE

To **Bank / Building Society ***

Address

..... **Post Code**.....

Please set up a new standing order to:

Barclays Bank PLC,

City of Cardiff Branch,

Cardiff, CF1 1SG

Sort Code: 20-18-23

Account Name:

PARISH OF ST ROBERT ABERKENFIG

Account No.: 73394867

Please debit my/our bank account as follows:

Account Name:

Account No.:

Sort Code:

the sum of £..... (amount in words)

starting on the..... day of (month)(year)

and on the same day every month until further notice.

Signature(s)

.....

Address

.....

..... **Post Code**

Please cancel any previous standing order in favour of the same beneficiary. This standing order supersedes all former arrangements.

Please send this form to your bank.