



Our Lady and St Gerard's Lostock Hall

NEWS AND VIEWS

2020

Issue No 635 January 2021

“Hope is one of the main guiding forces in human life, as without hope, easy becomes difficult and possible turns into impossible. But it is also very like our human nature to lose hope in challenging situations. Families and loved ones can give up easily and suffer from hopelessness if they do not receive proper support and care. We can easily cheer up someone close to us with messages filled with love, hope, and inspiration. “

Author Unknown

No one knows what 2021 will bring but we live in Hope that we will return to 'normal' at some time this year.

We started 2020 with so many plans and activities for the Parish, some did take place and some have had to be postponed until Covid-19 has gone or at least under control and restrictions have been lifted.



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HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

Vatican Basilica

Tuesday, 1 January 2019

On the Solemnity of Holy Mary, Mother of God

“All who heard were amazed at what the shepherds told them” (Lk 2:18). *To be amazed*: this is what is asked of us today, at the conclusion of the Octave of Christmas, as we continue to contemplate the Child born for us, lacking everything yet abounding in love. Amazement is what we should feel at the beginning of each year, for life is a gift that constantly gives us a chance to make a new start, even from the most lowly of circumstances.

Today is also a day to be amazed by the Mother of God. God appears as a little child, held in the arms of a woman who feeds her Creator. The statue before our eyes depicts the Mother and Child so close as to appear as one. That is the mystery we celebrate today, which gives rise to boundless amazement: God has become one with humanity forever. God and man, always together, that is the good news of this new year. God is no distant lord, dwelling in splendid isolation above the heavens, but love incarnate, born like us of a mother, in order to be a brother to each of us, to be close to us: the God of closeness. He rests on the lap of his mother, who is also our mother, and from there he pours out upon humanity a new tenderness. Thus we come to understand more fully God’s love, which is both paternal and maternal, like that of a mother who never stops believing in her children and never abandons them. God-with-us, Emmanuel, loves us despite our mistakes, our sins, and the way we treat our world. God believes in mankind, because its first and preeminent member is his own Mother.

At the beginning of the year, let us implore from Mary the grace to be amazed at the God of surprises. Let us renew the amazement we felt when faith was first born in us. The Mother of God helps us: the Mother who gave birth to the Lord, now presents us, reborn, to the Lord. She is a mother who generates in her children the amazement of faith, because faith is an encounter, not a religion. Without amazement, life becomes dull and routine, and so it is with faith. The Church too needs to renew her amazement at being the dwelling place of the living God, the Bride of the Lord, a Mother who gives birth to her children. Otherwise, she risks turning into a beautiful museum of the past. A “Church museum”. Our Lady instead gives the Church

the feel of a home, a home in which the God of newness dwells. Let us receive with amazement the mystery of the Mother of God, as the inhabitants of Ephesus did at the time of the Council. Like them, let us acclaim her "Holy Mother of God". From her, *let us allow ourselves to be gazed upon, to be embraced, to be taken by the hand.*

Let us allow ourselves to be gazed upon. Especially in times of need, when we are entangled in life's knots, we rightly lift our eyes to Our Lady, to Our Mother. Yet first, we should let ourselves be gazed upon *by* Our Lady. When she gazes upon us, she does not see sinners but children. It is said that the eyes are the mirror of the soul; the eyes of Mary, *full of grace*, reflect the beauty of God, they show us a reflection of heaven. Jesus himself said that the eye is "the lamp of the body" (*Mt 6:22*): the eyes of Our Lady are able to bring light to every dark corner; everywhere they rekindle hope. As she gazes upon us, she says: "Take heart, dear children; here I am, your Mother!"

This maternal gaze, which instils confidence and trust, helps us to grow in faith. Faith is a bond with God that engages the whole person; to be preserved, it needs the Mother of God. Her maternal gaze helps us see ourselves as beloved children in God's faithful people, and to love one another regardless of our individual limitations and approaches. Our Lady keeps us rooted in the Church, where unity counts more than diversity; she encourages us to care for one another. Mary's gaze reminds us that faith demands a tenderness that can save us from becoming lukewarm. Tenderness: the Church of tenderness. Tenderness is a word that today many want to remove from the dictionary. When faith makes a place for the Mother of God, we never lose sight of the centre: the Lord, for Mary never points to herself but to Jesus; and our brothers and sisters, for Mary is mother.

The gaze of the Mother, and the gaze of every mother. A world that looks to the future without a mother's gaze is shortsighted. It may well increase its profits, but it will no longer see others as children. It will make money, but not for everyone. We will all dwell in the same house, but not as brothers and sisters. The human family is built upon mothers. A world in which maternal tenderness is dismissed as mere sentiment may be rich materially, but poor where the future is concerned. Mother of God, teach us to see life as you do. Turn your gaze upon us, upon our misery, our poverty. *Turn to us thine eyes of mercy.*

Let us allow ourselves to be embraced. From Mary's gaze, we now turn to her heart, in which, as today's Gospel recounts, she "treasured all these things and pondered them" (Lk 2:19). Our Lady, in other words, took everything to heart; she embraced everything, events both good and bad. And she pondered all these things; she brought them before God. This was her secret. In the same way, she now takes to heart the life of each of us: she wants to embrace our every situation and to present it to God.

In today's fragmented world, where we risk losing our bearings, a Mother's embrace is essential. How much dispersion and solitude there is all around us! The world is completely connected, yet seems increasingly disjointed. We need to entrust ourselves to our Mother. In the Scriptures, Our Lady embraces any number of concrete situations; she is present wherever she is needed. She visits her cousin Elizabeth; she comes to the aid of the newlyweds in Cana; she encourages the disciples in the Upper Room... Mary is a cure for solitude and dispersion. She is the Mother of con-solation: she stands "with" those who are "alone". She knows that words are not enough to console; presence is needed, and she is present as a mother. Let us allow her to embrace our lives. In the *Salve Regina*, we call her "our life". This may seem exaggerated, for Christ himself is "life" (cf. Jn 14:6), yet Mary is so closely united to him, and so close to us, that we can do no better than to put our hands in hers and to acknowledge her as "our life, our sweetness and our hope."

And in the journey of life, *let us allow ourselves to be taken by the hand.* Mothers take their children by the hand and lovingly introduce them to life. But how many children today wander off on their own and lose their way. Thinking they are strong, they get lost; thinking they are free, they become slaves. How many, forgetting a mother's affection, live in anger with themselves and indifference to everything! How many, sad to say, react to everything and everyone with bitterness and malice! Life is such. Showing oneself "malicious" even seems at times to be a sign of strength. Yet it is nothing more than weakness. We need to learn from mothers that heroism is shown in self-giving, strength in compassion, wisdom in meekness.

God himself needed a Mother: how much more so do we! Jesus himself gave her to us, from the cross: "Behold your mother!" (Jn 19:27). He said this to the beloved disciple and to every disciple. Our Lady is not an optional accessory: she has to be welcomed into our

life. She is the Queen of peace, who triumphs over evil and leads us along paths of goodness, who restores unity to her children, who teaches us compassion.

Mary, take us by the hand. Clinging to you, we will pass safely through the straits of history. Lead us by the hand to rediscover the bonds that unite us. Gather us beneath your mantle, in the tenderness of true love, where the human family is reborn: *“We fly to thy protection, O Holy Mother of God”*. Let us together pray these words to Our Lady: *“We fly to thy protection, O Holy Mother of God”*.

Pope on Feast of Mary, Mother of God: The dignity and gifts of women 1st January 2020

Pope Francis' first homily of last year was dedicated to the figure of Mary, on the day the Church celebrates her as Mother of God. Mary was declared Mother of God at the Council of Ephesus in 431, and it was Pope Saint Paul VI who restored this solemnity to January 1st in 1974.

Women as sources of life

“On the first day of the year”, began Pope Francis, we celebrate a “nuptial union between God and humanity”, one that was inaugurated “in the womb of a woman”. “The rebirth of humanity began from a woman”, continued the Pope: “Women are sources of life”.

Born of a woman

That is why “every form of violence inflicted upon a woman is a blasphemy against God, who was born of a woman”, said Pope Francis. “How often are women’s bodies sacrificed on the profane altars of advertising, profiteering, and pornography, exploited like a canvas to be used”. “Women’s bodies must be freed from consumerism”, he said. “They must be respected and honoured”.

Keeping in her heart

Pope Francis noted how the Gospel repeats the image of Mary “keeping all things in her heart”. “Women typically take life to heart”, said the Pope. “Women show us that the meaning of life is not found in making things but in taking things to heart. Only those who see with

the heart see things properly, because they know how to ‘look into’ each person”.

Seeing with the heart

At the start of this New Year, Pope Francis challenged us to ask if we know “how to see with the heart”. Only if we take life to heart, he said, “will we know how to take care and overcome the indifference all around”. “If we want a better world, a world that will be a peaceful home and not a war field, may we take to heart the dignity of each woman”.

Women as mediators of peace

“Women are givers and mediators of peace”, said Pope Francis in his homily, adding that they should be “fully included in decision-making processes”. When women can share their gifts, said the Pope, “the world finds itself more united, more peaceful. Hence

After year of ‘trials, tragedies and tears’, UN chief sends message of hope for 2021

Praising the kindness shown by people around the world, the tireless efforts of frontline workers, the scientists who have developed vaccines in record time, and the countries making new advances to save the planet from climate catastrophe, [Secretary-General António Guterres](#) expressed his wish for a year of healing.



Against the backdrop of persistent suffering and grief, in a year when the COVID-19 pandemic marked everyone’s lives, Mr. Guterres said in his New Year’s message that we shall work together “in unity and solidarity”, so those “rays of hope can reach around the world”.

“So many loved ones have been lost — and the pandemic rages on, creating new waves of sickness and death”, he noted. Adding that poverty, inequality and hunger are on the rise, with jobs disappearing, certain sectors struggling to survive,

debts mounting and children struggling, Mr. Guterres raised his concerns regarding the increased violence in the home and insecurity.

A transition to a sustainable future

But a New Year lies ahead, he continued, and if we work together in unity and solidarity, the rays of hope can reach around the world: “people extending a helping hand to neighbours and strangers; frontline workers giving their all; scientists developing vaccines in record time; and countries making new commitments to prevent climate catastrophe”.

“That’s the lesson of this most difficult year”, he said, “both climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic are crises that can only be addressed by everyone together – as part of a transition to an inclusive and sustainable future.”

Resolutions and goals for next year: time for healing

As for the UN’s plans for 2021, a central ambition is to build a global coalition for carbon neutrality – net zero emissions – by 2050, Mr. Guterres spelled out, adding that “every government, city, business and individual can play a part in achieving this vision”.

Urging the world to act together, the UN Secretary-General called on people to make peace not just among themselves, but also with nature, tackling the climate crisis, stopping the spread of COVID-19 and making 2021 a year of healing: “healing from the impact of a deadly virus. Healing broken economies and societies. Healing divisions. And starting to heal the planet”, he noted.

“That must be our New Year’s Resolution”, the UN chief concluded, sending his wishes for a happy and peaceful 2021.

Parish Organisations

BOWLING CLUB

A Happy New Year to you all.
Let's hope this year we manage
to have some sort of a bowling
season. In anticipation of this I
hope you enjoy the following
poem.

The New Season

Christmas is over, the New Year
is passed
Now where did I see my bowling
bag last?
I really must find my bowls, don't
you know
And get them all polished and
ready to go
I've been counting the months,
weeks and the days

And all of my friends said, it was
just a phase
But I really must go and pay my
club fee
To join in again and play bowls,
you must see
I never thought I was cut out for
sport
But I happily played with the
bowls I had bought
The addiction grew daily and I
became hooked
Hoping for trophies, wherever I
looked
Hope the team captains will
select me
To play in the matches, and not
make the tea

So I will be practising in my
spare time
As well as attempting to come
up with rhyme
I hope that my verse has made
you agree
Bowling's the best thing that's
happened to me
I trust that team spirit is
boundless this year
Of all other clubs, we will have
no fear
So, fellow members, here we go
at last
The start of the season got here
pretty fast
We've made it this far, our
results clearly seen
Let's go and get 'em, they'll
know that we've been

W R Hesmondhalgh

New Year's Puns

MixMedia

- What is a New Year's resolution? Something that goes in one year and out the other.
- What is corn's favourite holiday? New Ears Eve.
- What's a cows favourite holiday? Moo Year's Eve
- Some astronauts wanted to have a New Year's party on the moon, but they didn't planet in time.
- What do farmers grow on January 1? New Year's Hay.
- What's the luckiest band to listen to on New Year's Day?

Parish Directory

Father Joseph Gee
Sister Louise Shields RNDM
The Presbytery
17C Brownedge Road
Lostock Hall
Preston
PR5 5AA
Tel: 01772 335387

In an Emergency please phone
either

St Marys Brownedge 335168
St Mary's Leyland 455955
St Catherine's Farrington
421174

St Patricks W-L-Dale 253709 or
St Teresa's Penwortham on

Contacts

743337
The Primary School 335025

Weekly Services

Sundays:

Saturday Vigil 6:00 p.m.
Sunday 10:00 a.m.

Weekdays:

Monday 6:30 p.m.
Tuesday 9:15 a.m.
Wednesday 9:15 a.m.
Thursday 9:15 p.m.
Friday NO MASS.

Holydays:

Eve 6:30 p.m.
Day 9:15 a.m.

Reconciliation: Confessions
before Weekend Masses.

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

Monday 18:00 to 18:30

Baptisms

Are normally conducted on the first and third Sunday of each month at 12:00 noon. Baptism Preparations currently take place every few months on two successive Wednesday evenings at 7 pm. Please telephone the Parish Priest or Sister on 335387 for details.

No Priest! What do we do?

If there is an Emergency and no Priest is available for the weekend Masses, the Eucharistic Ministers, particularly those who have been trained, will perform a Holy Communion Service and this will replace the Mass. Please note that this is **Only in an Emergency** and there is no time to arrange for another priest or no other is Priest is available. There may be occasions when the 8.30am Mass on a Sunday is cancelled, but the Saturday 6pm and Sunday 10am Masses will be as usual.

Marriages

At least six months notification of Marriage is required. Pre-marriage instruction is mandatory and organised by the Diocese. Please tele-

Parish Organisations

CONTACT

Advertising	John Corrigan	316295
Altar Servers	David Walker	629701
A.P.F.& Sacristan	Christine Flanagan	334723
Blessed Sacrament Guild		335387
Bowling Club	Warwick Hesmondhalgh	339700
CAFOD	Margaret Cronin	336475
Catechists & Sacramental Programme		335387
Children's Liturgy Group	Bridget Nisbet	324740
Choir	Jim Stokes	316574
Organist	Neil Coupe	322976
Drama Group	Grace Robinson	337844
Eucharistic Ministers & Readers	Michael Quinlan	467306
Flowers	Irene Crook	611513
Football Club	Phil Tinsley	07775890667
Fund Raising Group		335387
Gift Aid	John Robinson	335387
News & Views, Website , Printers	David Walker	629701
Majella Companions	Sister Louise	335387
Marriage Registrars	Margaret Cronin	336475
	Ann Quinlan	467306
Parochial Centre	Frank Redfearn	338285
Piety Shop	Vivian Page	313910
P.T.A.	Ross Free	339691
Sacred Heart Guild	Mary Hardman	468311
Safeguarding Officer	Colette Kingswood	07769690874
	or Colette.kingswood@virginmedia.com	
School (Staff, Ancillaries & Governors)	Jackie McNally	335025
Senior Citizens Organisers	Linda Walsh	311654
	Gloria Duffell	339966
Youth Representative	Lee McNulty	07478703414

Items for News & Views can be left at the Presbytery or emailed to the editor at newsviews@saintgerards.org.uk The last day for submissions is the 20th of each month.

www.saintgerards.org.uk

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Live Streaming Times
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Sunday	Mass	9:30 am 11:00 & 6:30 pm
Monday to Friday	Mass	9:30 am
Private Prayer	Tuesday Thursday	3:00 pm to 4:00 pm 3:00 pm to 4:00 pm
	Rosary	8.00 pm
Saturday	Mass	9:30 am 7 pm Vigil
Sunday	Mass	9:30 am 11:00 & 6:30 pm

Parish Diary

3rd Jan	2nd Sunday of Christmas	5th	At Agatha
6th	The Epiphany of the Lord Holy Day of Obligation	6th	Ss Paul Miki & Companions
10th	Baptism of the Lord	7th	5th Sunday of the Year
17th	2nd Sunday of the Year		
21st	St Agnes		
24th	3rd Sunday of the Year		
25th	The Conversion of St Paul		
26th	Ss Timothy & Tutus		
28th	St Thomas Aquinas		
31st	4th Sunday of the Year		
2nd Feb	The Presentation of the Lord		

EMAIL ADDRESS

We have changed our parish email address and are introducing a few more contacts in the near future. The main email is now :
office@saintgerards.org.uk
&
News and Views email is now:
newsnview@saintgerards.org.



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