

Being ready for the Lord

As we listen to today's Gospel about the wise and foolish bridesmaids, we can easily be led into a sense of fear that in so many ways we are not ready in our own lives to see God face to face. So many religious cults over the years have tried to tell us "the end of the world is nigh!" in order to fire their believers into a frenzy of self-correction, to get themselves "ready". But Jesus told us we would not know the day or the hour - none of us can be certain when the call of God will come, so are we expected to maintain that frenzy of readiness every day of our life? Should we live our lives in fear of meeting our Lord at a terrible moment we do not expect?

The fact is, our Christianity is built upon love, not fear. Jesus is our Saviour - he died and rose again out of love for you and me. He promised: "I will be with you always, even to the end of the age." (Mt.28:20). If we really believe his words, how can we fear the coming of one who has never left our side?

But we reproach ourselves: our lives are imperfect, our love is imperfect, our flame of Faith often burns dim and in our weakness we fail to see the face of Christ alongside us. Often we wonder "where has he gone?" But Jesus is still there, he sees us and he loves us, and holds out his cross before us.

Being "ready" is not about being perfect. It is not about planning our Lenten resolutions and keeping them all the year round. Plans like this are doomed to fail - we cannot resolve ourselves to be anything other than human, and our human nature is full of weakness. But, like St Paul tells us, it is that very weakness which God can use for good, because there we find our deep need for his presence.

Being ready means being glad that Jesus our friend is always with us. It means acknowledging that there are aspects of our lives where we need to grow in holiness, where we need to accept a spirit of change that we cannot achieve on our own - and about inviting Jesus gently to give us that healing, to make us grow. And it involves praying confidently that he will be patient with us when our progress is slow and at times we fall along the way.

Jesus is always there, not like George Orwell's "Big Brother" but as a loving doctor who sees our suffering and our failings, and offers freely the means to heal us. If we are "ready" we do not try to hide. We do not



want to hide - we could not *think* of hiding.

Little by little, Jesus will change us to become more like him in our ways. He will not make unreasonable demands - he will not expect us to become perfect overnight. But when the call of the Lord comes, we need have no fear that he would say "I do not know you." Let us put our trust in his love, every day of our lives.

November Book of the Dead

The updated Book of Remembrance is now on display at the front of the Church, and will remain there throughout the month of November. It will also be updated online as soon as possible. May all our departed loved ones rest in peace.

SACRAMENTAL PROGRAMME 2011/12

Remaining dates for 2011 are as follows:

(Please let Fr Martin or Denise know if you have a problem getting here)

Wednesday 16th November

"We are people who Pray"
6.30-7.30pm, at the Church

Sunday 20th November

Youth Sunday Mass: 10.00am

Wednesday 30th November

"We are people who celebrate Forgiveness"
6.30-7.30pm at the Church

Wednesday 7th December

Advent Reconciliation Service
7.00pm

with the people of the Parish

As always, this date is subject to confirmation, depending upon availability of other priests of the Deanery, upon whose assistance we depend

Saturday 24th December

Parish Celebration of Christmas
7.00pm

(our main family celebration)

- * *New to Holy Family parish?*
- * *Know someone who is sick or in hospital (or the hospice)?*
- * *Like a visit from the priest?*
- * *Think the parish may be able to help you, or you us, in any way?*

Please speak to Fr Martin, after Mass or at any convenient time.

Mass times at Holy Family

Saturday (Vigil Mass): 6.30pm
Sunday Morning: 10.00am
with **Children's Liturgy**
(Tea and Coffee served after morning Mass)
Weekdays: See Calendar, below
Holydays: Eve 7.00pm
9.30am on the day

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturday after Midday Mass, and 6.00-6.15pm,
or at any reasonable time on request.

(Rite II Reconciliation Services are celebrated in Advent and Lent)

Baptisms, Weddings & Funerals

by arrangement (6 months' notice required for weddings)

Weekday Calendar

Monday - Funeral Mass: 1.00pm, for the late John Lomax
May he rest in peace

Tuesday - Mass: 9.30am, Sacristy
Church cleaning afterwards - new volunteers always welcome

Wednesday - No Mass today (this week only)

Thursday - Eucharistic Service: 7.00pm, Sacristy

Friday - No Mass today (this week only)

Saturday - No Lunchtime Mass today (this week only)

*The Saturday Evening Vigil Mass will, of course, take place as usual -
Fr Peter Maloney has kindly agreed to provide cover*

WE PRAY THIS WEEK

... for the following, for whom Masses will be offered
- **the sick:** Eileen, Olga, Hughie, Jiula, Miranda,
Christine, Maureen, Kathleen, Christine, Mary, Ter-
esa, Winnie, Ewan, Bill, Julie, Peggy, Anne-Marie,
John, Denis, Marjorie, Denis, Margaret, Marie, Jane,
Christine, Ernest, Elva, Sister Alphonsus, Kathleen,
Margaret, Mary and Bridie, Helene and Ann Marie,

----- and **those who have died:** John Lomax,
Mary Clayton, Desmond O'Neill, Colin Paley, Gio-
vanni Natale, the deceased members of the Houli-
han family and all the Holy Souls. **We also pray**
peace and for a number of Special Intentions.

PARISH FUND-RAISING

The **Pie and Peas Social Evening** is coming up
on Tuesday week (15th November) at 7.30pm,
and tickets are on sale after Mass at £3.00 each.
The **Christmas Fair** is arranged for Friday 25th
November at 6.00pm in the school hall. **Further**
donations towards the bottle tombola would
be gratefully received. **Thank you!**

HOLY FAMILY RC CHURCH

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A FEW PARISH STATISTICS

Throughout October our official annual Mass count took place, and in spite of an unusually small number at Mass last weekend (just 118) our average emerges at 174 per week - down from 183 in the same month last year, but exactly equal to the 174 counted in 2009. Allowing for the natural week-by-week rise and fall, this suggests our numbers are remaining generally stable, and with several young families coming to Children's Liturgy, the future looks quite bright. **Special thanks are due to the Children's Liturgy Team for all their efforts.** However, another statistic is worth considering. Compared with last year, Gift Aided contributions to the weekly collection have risen, over the last 6 months, by approximately 15%, but there has none-the-less been a fall in the overall collection over the same period of approximately 11%. (This amounts to a real reduction of around £30 per week - you may check past newsletters online to see the trend). Whilst the timing of this report is unfortunate after speaking of minor petty thefts from the collection and a number of people still uncomfortable at the measures we have had to use to remove temptation, these thefts have been minor and there is no reason to believe they have had a significant impact. The fact is, we are all struggling with the financial crisis, and no-one can be expected to donate more than they can afford. **We are most grateful for your generosity**, each and every one of you. But one or two people have remarked, against themselves, that the amount they put in the collection has become a habit over several years, and they had never really thought about rising costs. It is such people only, if they *really can afford* to give more, that we as a parish might be bold enough to ask. If you cannot afford to respond to this, **please do not give it a second thought** - your family must always come first.

OFFERTORY Thank you for last week's collection of £164.84.

RETIRING COLLECTION

This week: SVP monthly collection.
Next week: Bishop's Administration Fund.

MAY GOD BLESS YOU ALL

throughout the coming week and always

SRC DT Registered Charity No 250037

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