

Weekly Newsletter During the Covid-19 Pandemic 28th June 2020

Joint Parishes of St Joseph's and St Wilfrid's Gateshead

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Today is the Feast of Saint Peter and Saint Paul

(OF) Readings for today are: -

First Reading	Acts 12:1-11
Responsorial Psalm	Psalm 33: 2-9
Second Reading	2 Timothy 4: 6=8, 17-18
Alleluia	
Gospel	Matthew 16:13-19

“You are Peter, Petra, the Rock on which I build My Church”



Peter said "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God" and Jesus replies "You are Peter, Petra, the rock upon which I build My Church" These two statements are not just an exchange of compliments between Peter and Jesus, they are statements of fact.

Simon recognises that Jesus is not just another prophet, a new Elijah or John the Baptist, he knows the fact, the truth, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God and in return Jesus acknowledges Simon's understanding and faith and bestows upon him the title of "Petra" meaning 'Rock', Jesus knows that His church is in good hands, that Peter is a solid foundation on which to continue building His Church. Peter is the bearer of the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven; he is the lawgiver with the power to bind and loose. To believe in Christ as the Son of the Living God makes you a Christian, to believe Peter is the Rock makes you a Catholic Christian.

Keys are a symbol of authority, we are given 'the key to the door' on reaching adulthood on our 21st birthday, we entrust the keys to our front doors to a worthy neighbour when we go on holiday, knowing that on our return they will be handed back to us and our property will have been maintained. Jesus will return, but in the meantime, He has entrusted His Church to Peter and his successors, our Popes, they are taking care of it and maintaining it until the time is right for His return.

This Gospel is an opportunity to recall an important event in the history of our country. Most of you will not realise that every coin you have in your pocket links us directly to the Pope and the seven Sacraments of our church, far-fetched? No, it's true!

Take the 50 pence piece, it is the largest, and the easiest to read. Look at the inscription around the Queen's head, it is written in Latin, the language of the Catholic Church; -Elizabeth and then the letters D.G. Reg. short for "Dei gratia Regina" - Elizabeth by the grace of God Queen", then the two letters F.D. short for "Fidei Defensor" - "Defender of the Faith"

How does the Queen have that wonderful title, 'Defender of the Faith'? and to which faith does it refer? Most people assume it refers to the faith of the Church of England, after all the queen is the head of that church, but we must delve deeper into our history to find the truth.

In 1509 King Henry VIII succeeded to the throne, with his bride Katharine, the Spanish Princess of Aragon, (she is buried in the Cathedral in Peterborough, the flag of Aragon over her tomb), he was a young handsome king, a good sportsman and rider,

excellent at falconry, a Latin and Greek scholar, attending Mass every day, England looked forward to a golden age.

King Henry was worried at this time about a young Monk on the continent, Martin Luther, who was teaching Theology at the university of Wittenberg. He was questioning the authority of the Pope, saying that we didn't need one and that "all we need are the Scriptures: that is our teaching authority", he was also teaching that there were only two Sacraments; Baptism and The Eucharist; the rest were merely church blessings.

King Henry did not want this teaching in England, so he wrote a book entitled "A Defence of the Seven sacraments" in which he quotes today's Gospel about St Peter, the Rock and Key Bearer of the Church. He sent a copy of his book to the then Pope, Leo X. Pope Leo was so thrilled with King Henry's book that he gave him the title "Defender of the Faith"

Queen Elizabeth 11 is a courageous Christian, she has maintained Christian values throughout her long reign, sadly Prince Charles, should he succeed his mother, intends to re-interpret the title to mean "Defender of Faith" – all faiths.

We live in a country of many faiths, we must respect everyone's right to choose, to follow their conscience when it comes to faith, the Catholic Church 'proposes' it does not 'impose', there must be no compulsion in Religion.

Today we renew our Faith in the authority of St Peter and his successors; we thank God for Pope Francis: The Chief Shepherd of the Church: The Rock and Keeper of Keys to Heaven. Let us all become 'Defenders of the Faith' the ancient Faith of England, the Pope and the seven Sacraments.

An early printing of the king's book is one of the treasures in the library at Ushaw College. King Henry's original is in the Vatican Museum.



Fourth Sunday After Pentecost
(E) Readings for today are: -

Introit	Psalms 26:12
Epistle 1	Romans 8 18-23
Gradual	Psalms 78: 9-10
Gospel	Luke 5 1-11

“Do not be afraid; henceforth you shall catch men”



The gospels of St Luke are mainly written for those who are already Christians; he is wanting to teach these Christians how to become committed and faithful followers of Jesus Christ, Luke's is not an evangelistic book, it is a discipleship book, this is why Luke misses out much of the first year of Jesus ministry when He is gathering new believers, and focuses more upon the second two years of ministry when He is choosing a few of those believers in order to teach and train them to become his apostles, turning them into committed and faithful disciples.

In Luke 5, he sets out what he believes to be the characteristics of a good disciple:

1. Disciples love to hear the Word of God taught (Luke 5:1-3)
2. Disciples obey Jesus even when it doesn't make sense (Luke 5:4-7)
3. Disciples are aware of their own sinfulness (Luke 5:8-10a)
4. Disciples are fishers of men (Luke 5:10b)
5. Disciples are willing to forsake all and follow Christ (Luke 5:11)

showing Christians how to become an exemplary disciple or follower of Jesus Christ.

1. Disciples love to hear the Word of God taught.

Luke 5:1-3

“So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God, that He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret” (another name for the Sea of Galilee)

We remember from the end of Luke 4 that Jesus was going all over the region of Galilee preaching and teaching in the synagogues, but Jesus wanted the whole world to listen to The Word of God and so He carried His message outside, to the shores of the lakes and into the countryside in order that as many as possible would hear, and the people pressed about Him as He taught and explained the Word of God. True disciples of Jesus Christ love to hear the Word of God taught, they long to hear the Bible explained to them.

The word "disciple" means "pupil" or "student," and all disciples of Jesus Christ know that their main text book, their only source of information about God and Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, about salvation, about heaven, about all things relating to spirituality is the Word of God. Therefore, people who genuinely love God, want to know as much about God as possible, and the only way to do this is to study God's Word and hear God's word taught. As Jesus explained the Word of God to the crowds, they hung on His every word. They wanted to make sure they understood. They longed to hear more. But eventually, the crowd pressed in so close that Jesus found Himself getting pushed closer and closer to the water's edge, and looking over his shoulder, He saw

Luke 5:2.

"two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing their nets".

The fishermen had spent all night fishing, and now had 'beached' their boats, and were off to the side cleaning their nets, they were able to listen to Jesus teach while they went about their work. On seeing the two empty boats and realising the crowd was growing ever larger Jesus, knowing the powers of amplification over water, decides to teach from one of the boats.

Luke 5:3.

"Then He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat."

This is not the first time Jesus and Simon had met, near the very beginning of Christ's ministry, Jesus had called Peter, Andrew, James and John to follow Him, they had been His disciples for a whole year, they witnessed His miracles, and listened to His teachings. They heard him teach over and over that God gives eternal life to anyone who believes in Jesus Christ alone for it. They remain His disciples, but they are still fishermen, they do not stop what they are doing, after all, listening to sermons never put any food on the table. And some of them, like Simon, had a wife at home for whom he needs to provide. They thought they could not follow Jesus without continuing to make a living, however, they were having a hard time of it. It had been a difficult night of fishing. They had fished all night but had not caught a single fish. So now they were cleaning their nets

readying for later that night when they might have more luck.

Simon was probably fully aware of Jesus plan to preach and teach from his boat if the need arose, they had possibly discussed it earlier, but Simon may not have believed such a huge crowd would gather, it would have been of little surprise to the fishermen when Jesus approached them, but Simon had just finished cleaning his nets, and was kind of hoping to get some sleep because he had to go fishing again later, however, always willing to serve, he picked up his nets, put them in the boat, and rowed a little way out from shore so that Jesus could continue to teach. It is after Jesus has finished teaching that he asks Simon to take his boat into deeper water to fish, He will have known what a poor catch His friends and followers had had during their night of fishing, and perhaps as a reward for their faithfulness He leads them to this good catch. Simon must have been exhausted and ready for sleep, but his devotion to Our Lord shows the first characteristic of being a disciple of Jesus, disciples love and long to hear the Word of God, they cannot get enough of it and not even sheer exhaustion will keep them from it. Perhaps that is something we need to remember when we are too tired to go to Mass, too busy to read the Bible or too distracted to say our prayers.

2. Disciples obey Jesus even when it does not make sense (Luke 5:4-7)

Luke 5:4.

“When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, “Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.”

We need to try to understand the enormity of Jesus request to fully understand the obedience and faith of Simon. First, Simon was the fisherman, Jesus was a carpenter and a teacher. Second, Simon had already been fishing all night long, and had not caught a thing, besides that, this was probably near the middle of the day now, and everybody knows that the middle of the day is generally the worst time to fish. The fish have retreated to hide under their rocks and submerged logs. They have gone to the cooler parts of the water. As long as the sun is out, they hide where no predators can see them. So, chances are, if they didn't catch anything at night, they surely wouldn't catch anything during the day. And finally, most frustrating of all for Simon, is that he had just finished cleaning his nets to get them ready for fishing later when the fishing would hopefully be better. If he dropped them in the lake now, he would have to clean them again later. This request of Jesus to put down the nets does not make any sense at all and will only cause more work for Simon. Yet look what Simon says:

Luke 5:5.

“Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net.”

Such a statement of true faith! Simon tells Jesus that this request does not make much sense, but he will obey Jesus anyway. Sometimes, the things God wants us to do make little sense to other people, or even to ourselves. But if God has spoken to us through His Word, we must obey. This is what Simon did.

Luke 5:6-7.

“And when they had done so, they enclosed a great number of fish, but their net was breaking. And they beckoned to their comrades in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink.”

Obedience to Christ's commands always results in divine blessing. Here the blessing was a boatload of fish. So many, in fact, that their nets were about to break, and they had to call their friends over to help them. But even then, the two boats were not large enough to hold all the fish. They filled both the boats to overflowing, and then the boats began to sink!

When God tells you to do something, do it, even if it does not make sense. God told Noah to build an ark because a flood was coming when nobody had ever even heard of rain. And Noah did it. God called Abraham to pack up his possessions and start walking. And Abraham did it, even though he did not know where he was going. God told the people of Israel to march around Jericho for seven days if they wanted the walls to fall, and they did it.

God wants to work through you. God wants to bless you. But you have to be like Simon who says, “That doesn't make sense, but nevertheless, at your word, I will obey.” Disciples obey Jesus even when it doesn't make sense.

3. Disciples are aware of their own sinfulness.

Luke 5:8-10a.

“But when Simon Peter saw this, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!” For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish which they had made; and so also were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon”.

Simon Peter's response may initially surprise us, it is perhaps not the way we would respond to a miracle. Why is it that this event caused Simon Peter to realize his own sinfulness? We need to remember what has happened to Simon Peter and the recent decisions he has made. A year prior to this event, Jesus had called Simon to follow him and be his disciple. At that time, Peter had accepted the call, he committed himself to following Jesus, but in that year, he probably didn't

make much of a living from his role as a fisherman and he was possibly wondering if being a disciple was actually worth his while, he suddenly realizes that his doubts were ill placed as he understands through this miracle that God will supply all of his needs. If he follows Jesus, he will not go without food or clothes. Simon Peter realizes his own proud and arrogant self-sufficiency. Jesus had asked Simon to follow Him, and Simon, after following Jesus for a while, had gone back to fishing. This implied that he had more important, more practical things to do. In Luke 5:8, Simon Peter recognizes his grave mistake. There is nothing more important than following Jesus. And when we follow Jesus, He promises to provide for our needs.

4. Disciples are fishers of men

Luke 5:10b.

"And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; henceforth you shall catch men."

Jesus has just given them the biggest success in their fishing careers. Never, in their whole lives, had they caught as many fish at one time. In today's terminology, we could say that this was their big contract, this was the huge opportunity, a chance of a lifetime, their boat had finally come in. But Jesus says to them, "Leave it. From now on you will catch men." He says, "You think this is a big success? It is a bigger success to catch men. You think catching a boatload of fish is exciting. Reeling a human life into the kingdom of God is even more exciting." Jesus gave them the best day of fishing ever, then told them that if they were up to it, He has even better things in store for them than that.

The Bible tells us this same thing all over. Proverbs 11:30 says that he who wins souls is wise. The value of one single human is greater than a boatload of fish. If the disciples catch one single person out of the clutches of the devil and help bring that person into the loving arms of God the Father, that catch alone is of infinite and eternal value. When all the fish in the world have died, or been eaten up, that human being will live on and on and on in eternity. Jesus is inviting the disciples to make a catch that will last for eternity. He has given them a choice. They can continue to be fishermen, going out every day trying to catch a few morsels of meat, or they can be fishers of men, going out every day trying to catch human lives that last for eternity. Jesus has made the same invitation to us all, your worldly profession may be teacher, or contractor, or gardener, or businessman, but that is just something to put food on the table. Your real profession is to be a fisher of men. And you can catch men wherever you are, and whatever you are doing. It is ok to feel afraid or overwhelmed by the task, but you overcome it by doing as Jesus asked, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." Nobody becomes a fisher of men naturally. Nobody becomes a fisher of men by being told a thousand times, "You better go witness, because that's what Christians do." Nobody becomes a fisher of men by being put on a guilt trip that they are not out there doing door-to-door evangelism. You become a fisher of men by following Jesus. If you decide to follow Jesus down the path of discipleship, He will make you

fishers of men. And that is why this is the fourth mark of a true disciples. They become fishers of men.

5. Disciples are willing to forsake all and follow Christ

Luke 5:11

“So when they had brought their boats to land, they left all and followed Him.”

Simon just had the greatest fishing day of his life. He had the greatest fishing day he had ever heard of anybody ever having. He had probably caught more fish in one day than he had ever caught before in an entire year. Enough to fill two boats. Hey, they could sell the fish, and not work for a whole year! That would be great. Think of the family vacations they could go on. Think of the nice clothes he could buy for his wife. Think of the new house they could afford. But Jesus has just called them to go after something bigger and more valuable. He had called them to be fishers of men.

And they realized that this was of such supreme importance, that they left all and followed Him. They did not even pause to count the fish. They just beached the boats, then jumped to land, and left it all behind. The boats, the nets, the record number of fish, everything. They knew that following Jesus was much more valuable than a boatload of fish. And they knew that if Jesus could give them a boatload of fish in the middle of the day, He would certainly provide for their needs later as they arose. So, they did not care about what they were leaving behind. It did not matter when compared to the value of following Jesus.

Becoming a Christian is absolutely free. There is no cost whatsoever. Jesus paid it all. Through his death, he paid the penalty for our sin. We receive the free gift of eternal life simply by believing in Jesus Christ for it. But becoming a disciple is completely different. There is great cost involved to becoming a disciple. It may cost everything you have, everything you are, everything you own. But the results are well worth it. The reward far outweighs the cost. This is what Simon and his companions realized, and this is why they left everything and followed Christ. They were already believers. They had already believed in Jesus for eternal life and so were guaranteed a place in heaven. But now Jesus was calling them to much more. Jesus was calling them to become a disciple, and they answered the call with a resounding YES!

To be a Christian cost us nothing at all, but how many of us can truly call ourselves disciples, how many of us are willing to give up our daily schedule to make listening to God's Word a priority? Are we willing to give up what we think we know about life and success and just obey Jesus no matter what? Are we prepared to make following Jesus our top priority? Can we give up our plans

for life and let God use us to bring people into His kingdom? Are we willing to give up all our possessions and worldly wealth and forsake it all for the sake of following Jesus? Simon Peter did, and it not only changed his life, it changed eternity, he found that nothing in the entire world compared to being with Jesus and he became one of the greatest fishers of men the world has ever seen. And it's all because of the time when Jesus said, "Come follow me" Peter responded with, "Yes, I will"



Opening Our Churches

The following Churches in the Diocese are now open for private prayer, please consult the websites/newsletters/face-book pages of these parishes for further information about times and days of opening

(please note no young person under age 16 may attend unaccompanied)

- St Aidan's, Ashington
- St Mary's Cathedral, Newcastle
- St Patrick's, Consett
- St Mary's Sunderland
- St Paul's Alnwick
- St Bede's Bedlington
- St Mary's Bishop Auckland
- SS Joseph, Patrick, and Cuthbert Coxhoe
- St Augustine's Darlington
- Our lady of Mercy and St Godric Durham
- Immaculate Heart of Mary Gateshead
- St Charles Gosforth
- St Aloysius Hebburn
- St Mary's Hexham
- St Teresa of the Infant Jesus Newcastle
- St Bede's Newcastle
- St Mary's Newton Aycliffe
- The Sacred Heart North Gosforth
- St Bede's South Shields
- St Joseph's Ushaw Moor
- Our Lady and St Columba Wallsend
- St John Boste Washington
- St Anne's Winlaton

The opening of our churches is no easy task and our Priests have been given incredibly detailed and complex guidance notes on how safe opening can begin to take place, the Bishop makes the decision about which church will be next to open, once the Parish Priest has been told it is his turn he will contact those who have volunteered to help. These volunteers along with the Parish Priest will attend a meeting, held by the Diocesan Property Department, to undertake a risk assessment and training. The opening of churches for private prayer is a pre-requisite for that church opening for Mass.

VOLUNTEERING

Thank You to all those who have volunteered to help with cleaning and stewardship, you will be contacted about the meeting when Canon Brown is given a date by the Bishop.

If you would like to volunteer in any way, please email

shaunadevitt@tiscali.co.uk

OR

michaelbrown6@btconnect.com

PLEASE NOTE:

NO-ONE OVER AGE 70 or WITH ANY UNDERLYING HEALTH CONDITIONS or if PREGNANT can volunteer
Your continued patience, support and understanding are very much appreciated, and we ask that you continue to pray for the absolute best decisions to be made.

An Act of Spiritual Communion

When we are unable to receive Holy Communion, it has long been the catholic tradition to make an Act of Spiritual Communion. St. Thomas Aquinas defined a Spiritual Communion as "an ardent desire to receive Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament and lovingly embrace Him as if we had actually received Him. One composed by St Alphonsus Ligouri in 1870 is: -

"My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment 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."

Act of Perfect Contrition

When we cannot get to confession the Catholic Church has made provision for our reconciliation with the Father through an Act of Perfect Contrition, Cardinal Vincent Nichols recently spoke these words, "What the Church teaches us, is that God in His mercy, forgives our sins when we are truly sorry for them. And when we turn to Him and express our sorrow in an Act of Contrition, it's called an Act of Perfect Contrition when its focus is on the mercy and the love of God rather than on the burden of our guilt. So to make an act of Perfect Contrition, we simply need to turn to God and be, as it were, overwhelmed by God's mercy, and then express in our own words or in the words of the traditional Act of Contrition, the sorrow we feel for our offences against the goodness of God. When we do that in all sincerity of heart, we may rest assured that God forgives our sins and that we come away from that Act of Perfect Contrition freed from those sins And, as I say, the only thing we have to remember is, when it is possible to make a Confession again, that we mention the grievous sins which were forgiven by this Perfect Act of Contrition."



Thank You

To all those who have continued to make donations to Our Churches throughout the pandemic. Your support and sacrifice are very much appreciated, without your continued financial help our churches would not be able to survive.

If Anyone would like to continue with their weekly donations the details of how to do so are below: -

To donate via bank transfer:

Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle

Gateshead St Wilfrid's

Sort Code 40-34-18

Account Number 01164120

Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle

Gateshead St Joseph's

Sort Code 40-34-18

Account Number 31164066

Please use reference: - Weekly Income

OR

Donate using a cheque made out to either parish

'DHN St Joseph's Gateshead' or 'DHN St Wilfrid's Gateshead'

St Wilfrid's

Ford House

Sunderland Road

Gateshead NE8 3QR

St Joseph's

Presbytery

High West Street

Gateshead NE8 1LX

KEEP YOURSELF UPDATED AND INFORMED

- Parish Website and Facebook pages are updated regularly
- Parish Newsletter is available on our website each week
- Diocesan website www.rcdhn.org.uk
- Bishops' Conference website www.cbcew.org.uk

Keeping us updated with your contact information

During this time of social distancing and self-isolation, Canon Michael Brown has tried to keep in touch with as many parishioners as he can to offer support and comfort. He has been able to do this only with those parishioners for whom he holds up to date contact details.

Please ensure your contact details are correct. Use parish email addresses or telephone to update your information.

Access to the Newsletter

If you know of anyone from either Parish who cannot access this newsletter via the website and would like to receive it by email, please ask them to give their email address to Canon Michael Brown email

michaelbrown6@btconnect.com or Shauna Devitt at shaunadevitt@tiscali.co.uk

Diocesan News

Live Streaming of Masses

The following parishes have set up a live stream of Mass. Please visit the links for more details:

St. Mary's Cathedral, Newcastle

[Cathedral's YouTube Channel](#). Each day at 12.00 noon (Sunday at 11.30am) Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and devotions live streamed at 5.00pm each day.

Our Lady of Mercy Parish, Sunderland

[YouTube channel](#). You can also find details and information on their [Facebook page](#).

Billingham, St. Thomas of Canterbury

[Facebook page](#), Mass daily at 12.00 noon, Exposition at 1.00pm and Benediction at 2.00pm.

Chester le Street, St. Cuthbert and Sacriston, St. Bede

A recording of daily Mass via their [Facebook Page](#).

Darlington, St. Augustine's

Sunday Mass at 9.15am via their [Facebook page](#).

St. Mary's, Hexham

Via their [website](#) or [YouTube channel](#). Sunday Mass 10.00am, weekday Mass 6.00pm and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament Sunday 4.00pm.

St. Paul's, Cramlington

[Facebook Page](#).

Stockton Family Parish

[Facebook Page](#).

Parish of Our Lady Star of the Sea

[Facebook Page](#), Mass daily at 9.30am.

Pope Video

The Pope Video is a monthly video with notes that highlights the Holy Father's monthly intentions for prayer. During this month of May the intention is for Deacons. Follow this link to watch and read. thepopevideo.org

Community Support

Gateshead Council have a dedicated page on their website offering a network of support for those who need help: -

<https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/15181/coronavirus-COVID-19-Community-support>

Or phone 01914333000

Alcoholics Anonymous Call free on 08009177650 or email help@aamail.org

Pastoral Care

As part of the pastoral care of parishioners and others during this time several qualified counsellors and listeners have generously made themselves available to anyone who may be troubled by the negative effect of the situation. These councillors and listeners can be contacted through St Mary's Cathedral Listening Service on 01912326953

IMPORTANT: EU Citizens All EU, EEA and Swiss citizens living in the UK MUST apply through its Settlement Scheme to continue living, working, and accessing services here. The deadline is **30 June 2021**. Details and links to the application process can be found at: gov.uk/eusettledstatus Assistance is available at: gov.uk/help-eu-settlementscheme