



parish

# newsletter

11 September 2022 | Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)

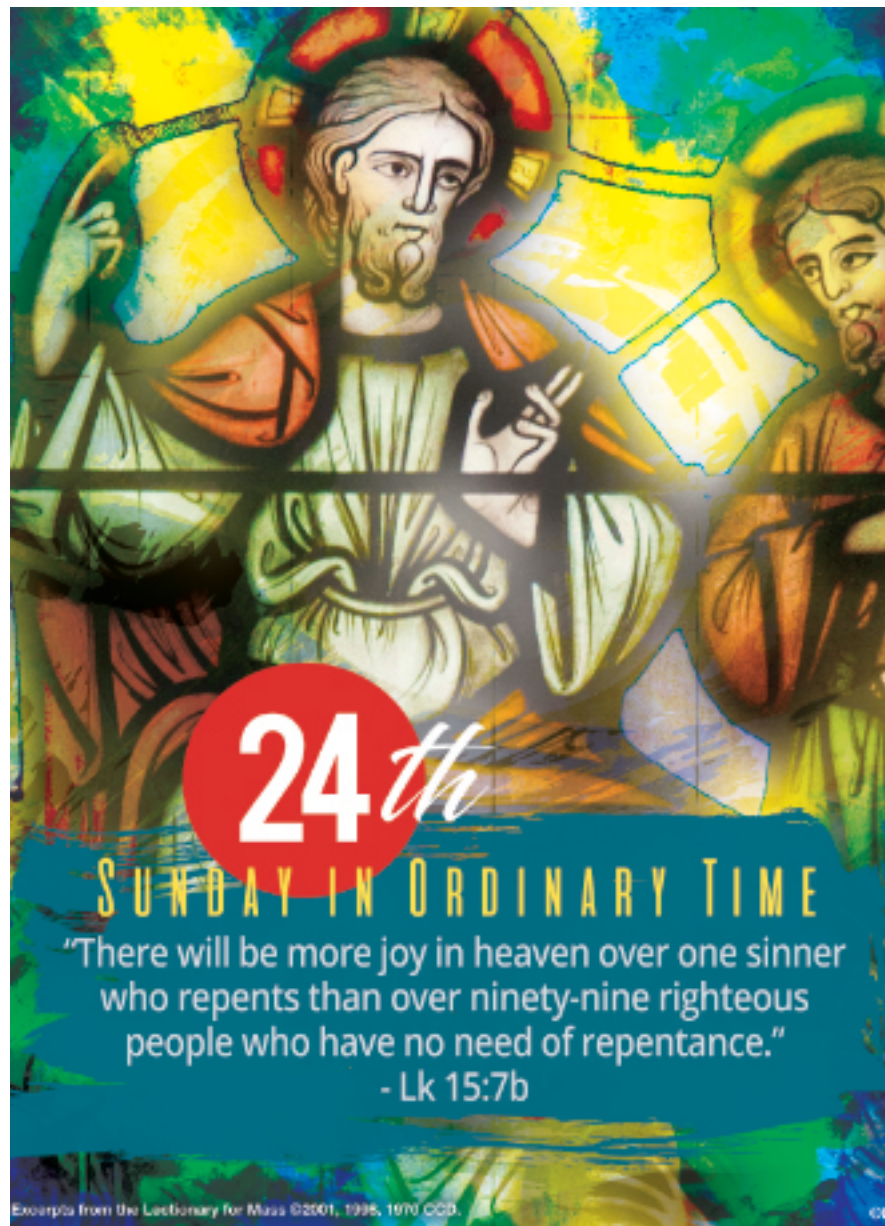
## Come back to me!

Since God created human beings, we have struggled to keep our focus on God. We wrestle with the question of “who is God” and foolishly believe some of God’s job description can be better completed by us. We wander in different directions, lose our way, think that happiness can be found elsewhere and even construct golden calves to worship. Are we simply too independent or just blatantly stubborn? It’s a good question to ask. Even with all of our silliness and distractions, God compassionately and patiently waits. He lets us assert our wills and knows that perhaps one day we will actually wake up and realise how lost we are.

“Since happiness is nothing other than the enjoyment of the highest good and since the highest good is above, no one can be made happy unless he rises above himself, not by an ascent of the body but of the heart. But we cannot rise above ourselves unless a higher power lifts us up ... Divine aid is available to those who seek it from their hearts, humbly and de-

voutly; and this means to sigh for it in this valley of tears, through fervent prayer (St. Bonaventure).” One of the biggest human struggles is discerning what, exactly, is the highest good. We are ordered to achieve it but if we pursue it with clouded vision, we will never truly find it.

One of the greatest obstacles to God’s power and love is a stubborn, closed heart of stone. When we are fiercely determined to set our sights elsewhere for happiness or simply ride the popular currents of the day, we will never satisfy the deep ache and longing within. We know that ache well. It is precisely why we scurry all over the place, attempting to find the next best thing to take away its pain. Nothing in the created world ever can or will. We continue our journey. One day, people may wake up and realise that they are grazing in the wrong pasture and putting themselves in harm’s way. When this awakening occurs, it will be a most joyous day as we will see God’s wide-open arms waiting to receive us. “Lead



me, Lord, in your path, and I will enter in your truth. Let my heart rejoice that it may fear your name (St. Bonaventure).”

## Everyday Stewardship

### Rise, and Go to Your Father

“If you pull into my driveway and honk, you better be dropping off a package, because you’re sure not picking anything up.”

I first read these words in the pages of W. Bruce Cameron’s “8 Simple Rules for Dating my Teenage Daughter,” (that’s Rule No. 5, by the way).

There’s a certain respect that is shown by someone who takes the time to come

to the door, ring the bell and wait to be greeted. Being willing to go through the niceties for the sake of appearances is a small act of deference on the part of the person doing the picking-up, even if it’s not for a date. Without it, the whole scenario becomes entitled.

I want you to think of something that you want or need, but do not have. Is it peace? Is it financial stability? Is it strength? Is it friendship?

The brother of the prodigal son had a lot of unexpressed desires. He sees his brother heaped with gifts and favours, feasting on the fattened calf, and he is enraged. I haven’t been given half of that, he thinks, and I’ve worked so hard.

But for all his faithfulness, one has to wonder — did this son ever simply ask for what he needed? Did he get out of the car, so to speak, and ring the bell? Or did he sit in the driveway leaning on the horn?

God wants us to come before Him. He wants us to ask. He wants us to be like Moses — sure enough of our Father’s indulgence to boldly ask for it. Think again about what you need but do not have, and ask yourself: Have I approached the door and rung the bell?

— Tracy Earl Welliver, MTS



## Living the Paschal Mystery

This Sunday’s gospel unravels for us the movement of repentance, from overture through to coda. Repentance begins with being lost, moves through a sonata of straying and wandering and dissolution, and ends (hopefully!) with being found and feasting. Jesus

uses not one but three parables to sound for us the mighty music of how much God seeks us when we are lost, how much God (and all of heaven!) rejoices when we are found. The shepherd man, housekeeper woman, and prodigal father have in common losing, searching

and finding, and feasting. This is a glorious feast—the only one that brings us from death to Life. This is the feast of repentance, the only source of everlasting joy. This feast only happens through encounter with Jesus who knows when we are lost, ever seeks us and greatly desires that we be found, and offers the lavish feast of himself for our celebrating and rejoicing.

Jesus uses three situations (a lost sheep, a lost coin, a lost son) to dramatise that whenever we stray from God’s steadfast compassion and love (become lost), God always seeks to find us and show us divine mercy. For our part, we must realise we are lost, recognise our need for God, and begin the journey home to be embraced by divine mercy. When God’s offer of mercy is met by our repentance, all in heaven rejoice. God’s feast is about rejoicing over us humans who stray from God, but repent and are welcomed back.

Tax collectors and sinners are “drawing near to listen to Jesus.” Pharisees and scribes, on the other hand, observe what is happening and complain to Jesus. He answers their complaint with three parables that turn the table on their belief about who is really saved. Not those Pharisees and scribes who are self-righteous and unrelenting, but those sinners who are self-aware and repent. Jesus invites everyone to his table—his feast of mercy. But not everyone chooses to come. Only those come who recognise their need to be

found. God always knows when we are lost and gives us every means to be found. God desires that no one be lost, that we repent and return to the Source of our Life. For this we rejoice and feast.

If God is so compassionate and loving with us, then as faithful followers of Jesus we must risk being so compassionate and loving with others. First of all, this means that we don’t judge whether the other is worth our mercy and love. God shows us that all are—even outcasts and sinners. Second, we ourselves don’t earn mercy and love. Since they are free gifts of God to us, they are gifts we freely give to others. We don’t wait until someone wrongs us to show mercy and love—we offer these gifts simply because the other is a beloved of God.

It’s much easier for us to be merciful and loving when the end situation is better for us. For example, we might forgive a family member some wrongdoing because we want peace in the family. It is far more risky to be merciful when there is no immediate gain for us in sight. As those who follow Jesus, we are called to be merciful simply because this is the way Jesus was. Living the paschal mystery means that we feast well and often because we realise that God unfailingly extends mercy and love without calculating whether we deserve it or not. All we need to do is repent. All we need to do is be willing to be found.

## Live the Liturgy

It is easy to worship things other than God. Our perception of reality gets distorted as well as our understanding of truth. Ideologies and theories that find a popular reception are extolled when they are simply lies. Human beings easily get lost. God came to us in the person of Jesus Christ to rescue us from our sins and keep us where we need to be. But we have to realise that we are living in darkness before we can ask for light. We have

to recognise that we are lost so that we can desire to be found. And, we have to know that we have sinned so that we can repent. God always patiently waits. God is delighted when one of His children chooses life over death and runs toward His unconditional Mercy. Let’s not be so stubborn and stiff-necked that we fail to recognise that we may have wandered into the wrong pasture.







<b>First Reading</b> So the Lord relented in the punishment he had threatened to inflict on his people. (Ex 32:14)	<b>Psalm:</b> I will leave this place and go to my father. (Ps 50[51])	<b>Second Reading:</b> This saying is trustworthy and deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. (1 Tm 1:15)	<b>Gospel Acclamation:</b> Alleluia, alleluia! May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ enlighten the eyes of our mind, so that we can see what hope his call holds for us. Alleluia!	<b>Gospel:</b> “There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need of repentance.” (Lk 15:7)
---	---	--	--	---

11	<b>TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (C)</b>	Ex 32:7-11, 13-14/Ps 51:3-4, 12-13, 17, 19/1 Tm 1:12-17/Lk 15:1-32 or 15:1-10 08:00 <b>Morning Prayer</b> Mercy Chapel 09:00 <b>Mass</b> Convent Romano Minchella 10:30 <b>Mass</b> St Mary's Gaby Huggins (RIP) 17:00 <b>Mass</b> St Mary's People of the Parish
12	Monday The Holy Name of Mary	1 Cor 11:17-26, 33/Ps 40:7-8a, 8b-9, 10, 17/Lk 7:1-10 08:00 <b>Morning Prayer</b> Mercy Chapel 09:00 <b>Rise</b> Mercy Chapel 12:05 <b>Mass</b> St Mary's George & Neil Brown & Tom Duffy (RIP) 17:15 <b>Evening Prayer</b> Mercy Chapel
13	Tuesday	1 Cor 12:12-14, 27-31a/Ps 100:1b-2, 3, 4, 5/Lk 7:11-17 08:00 <b>Morning Prayer</b> Mercy Chapel 12:05 <b>Mass</b> St Mary's Patricia Rutter (RIP) 13:00 <b>Over 60s</b> St Mary's Catholic Centre 16:00 <b>Chaplaincy Tuesday</b> Upper Room 17:15 <b>Evening Prayer</b> Mercy Chapel
14	<b>The Exultation of the Cross</b>	Nm 21:4b-9/Ps 78:1bc-2, 34-35, 36-37, 38/Phil 2:6-11/Jn 3:13-17 08:00 <b>Morning Prayer</b> Mercy Chapel 12:05 <b>Mass</b> St Mary's Thomas Baby (RIP) 17:15 <b>Evening Prayer</b> Mercy Chapel
15	Our Lady of Sorrows	1 Cor 15:1-11/Ps 118:1b-2, 16ab-17, 28/Jn 19:25-27 or Lk 2:33-35 08:00 <b>Morning Prayer</b> Mercy Chapel 10:00 <b>Open House</b> St Mary's Catholic Centre 10:15 <b>Confessions</b> St Cecilia's 10:30 <b>Mass</b> St Cecilia's Holy Souls 12:05 <b>Mass</b> St Mary's Florence McDonald (RIP) 17:00 <b>Evening with Jesus and Friends</b> Mercy Chapel
16	Ss Cornelius, & Cyprian	1 Cor 15:12-20/Ps 17:1bcd, 6-7, 8b and 15/Lk 8:1-3 08:00 <b>Morning Prayer</b> Mercy Chapel 12:05 <b>Mass</b> St Mary's Leo Herbert (RIP) & Family 17:15 <b>Evening Prayer</b> Mercy Chapel
17	Saturday	1 Cor 15:12-20/Ps 17:1bcd, 6-7, 8b and 15/Lk 8:1-3 08:00 <b>Morning Prayer</b> Mercy Chapel 10:30 <b>Confessions</b> St Mary's 11:00 <b>Mass</b> St Mary's Ints of Margaret Nesbit 11:45 <b>Confessions</b> St Mary's 18:00 <b>Vigil Mass</b> St Cecilia's Tom Simmons, Janice Connaughton (RIP)
18	<b>TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (C)</b>	Am 8:4-7/Ps 113:1-2, 4-6, 7-8/1 Tm 2:1-8/Lk 16:1-13 or 16:10-13 08:00 <b>Morning Prayer</b> Mercy Chapel 09:00 <b>Mass</b> Convent Colin Stones (RIP) 10:30 <b>Mass</b> St Mary's In thanksgiving Hojilla-Candelon Family 17:00 <b>Mass</b> St Mary's People of the Parish

# Announcements

**Ministers' Meeting**  
What's it like being a minister in Our Lady of Mercy Parish? If you're a reader, minister of holy communion, sing in the choir, help at children's liturgy, welcome, clean, serve at the altar, do the flowers, work as a catechist, help with health and safety or if you do one of a hundred other roles, we'd live to learn from you!

Come along to a meeting of ministers from St Cecilia's and St Mary's on Sunday, 25 September at 3pm.  
**New Catholics**  
Are you thinking about joining the Catholic Church? Would you like to know more about the Catholic faith? Do you know

Come and learn from the great saints how they prayed and how different ways of praying can transform your relationship with God. Starting 10 October at 6.30pm in St Mary's Catholic Centre.

**40 Hours' Devotion**  
Starting in the evening of 29 September and finishing on the morning of 1 October we're holding our second 40 hours of prayer and adoration. Last year, as we were coming out of lockdown, it was a period of incredible grace for our parish and the city. What graces will Jesus give us this year when we offer him this extended time of prayer?

**Prayer 101**

**First Reconciliation and Communion**  
Parents' Meeting at 6pm in the Parish Centre, Bridge Street.

**Healing Mass**  
For the feast of Our Lady of Sorrows at St Cuthbert's Church, Seaham on 15 September.

**Thanksgiving Mass**  
We're holding a traditional West African thanksgiving for new and recently graduated students at the 10.30



Oaklea, David, Marion, Dave, Neil, Paul, Andrew, Jacob, Stella, David, Alisa, Susan, Mary, Jack, Richard, Margaret, Moira, Colin, Gerry, Nick, Maureen, Stella and Rose.



Mary Elizabeth Hallan  
Scott, Veronica Stafford;  
George Bowler, Cambel,  
John Erskine, Andrew Camphuis, Colin Stones

*Let us know if you would like a name added to the list.*

## Why do we do that?



**Question:** Why does Mary have so many feast days and names?  
**Answer:** Christians first began celebrating feast days in honour of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, in the fifth century. That celebration (originally called the Feast of the Dormition and now known by Roman Catholics as the Solemnity of the As-

sumption) was celebrated on August 15. Very soon, however, other special days dedicated to Mary began to appear in Jerusalem, Rome, and other major cities of the Christian world. These days of feasting became important parts of the life of the community. But, more importantly, each of these unique celebrations became an opportunity to focus on a different facet of the Christian faith, as believers focused their attention on specific events or mysteries of the lives of Mary and her Son.  
Over the centuries, some of these celebrations became universal (such as the Assumption on August 15, the Immaculate Conception on December 8, and the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God on January 1). Other

## Questions for the Week

**First Reading:** The Lord is persuaded by Moses' prayer of petition not to punish the Israelites for their apostasy. When has the Lord answered one of your prayers of petition?  
**Second Reading:** Paul speaks of God's abundant mercy in the context of his former life as an arrogant, sinful, and ignorant man. In what ways do you think the Lord has been patient with you?

**Gospel:** The parable of the prodigal (lost) son is one of the best-known parables of Jesus. Which of the characters do you most resonate with: the father, the older son, or the lost son?

Blessed Virgin Mary) help us to reflect on different aspects of Mary's faith and the ways that the Holy Spirit is at work in her and through her, especially as the Mother of Jesus.

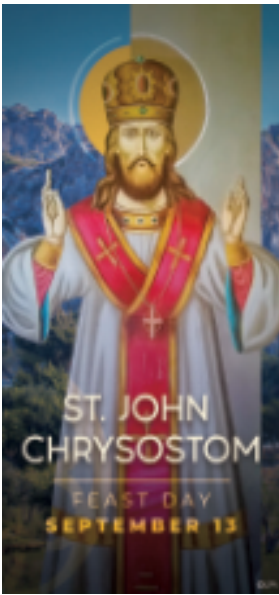
We are always invited to always see Mary in connection with the saving work of her Son. She is, of course, a patroness and protector for every Christian, but she is also a model of discipleship and contemplation: "Having entered deeply into the history of salvation, Mary, in a way, unites in her person and re-echoes the most important doctrines of the faith: and when she is the subject of preaching and worship she prompts the faithful to come to her Son, to his sacrifice and to the love of the Father" (*Lumen Gentium*, 65).

## Saint of the Week

Born in Antioch in the 4th century, and raised by his widowed mother, Saint John received a rigorous classical education. He was first called to the ascetic life, even spending time as an anchorite living in a cave near Antioch. However, this life of extreme mortification was hard on his physical body, and he eventually returned to the city to recover. Saint John was ordained in 298. He spent the next 12

years preaching in the Cathedral of Antioch, and it was most likely during this time that he earned the name Chrysostom which means "golden-mouthed." In 397 or 398 he was made archbishop of Constantinople against his will. This post placed Saint John in the midst of imperial politics. But he would not be drawn in. He kept a modest household without extravagance and refused to serve the sumptuous suppers for political supplicants that predecessors in the position had. He preached

against corruption and decadence and fought for the reform of clergy even deposing corrupt bishops. Unfortunately, this high moral stance made enemies of powerful people at court and in the Church. They conspired against him and eventually Saint John was exiled to Armenia. He died in exile in 407. He was made a Father of the Church at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 and declared a Doctor of the Church in 1568.



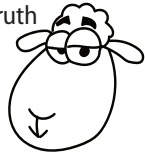
Mass on Sunday, 25 September, Everyone is invited to join in the singing, dancing an procession!

## Flock Notes

As I write this, I'm watching the sun rise over the Mount of Olives, casting a reddish-golden glow over Jerusalem. It is only 6.30 am and you can already tell it is going to be a hot day.  
In two hours time that


same sun will start rising over the North Sea casting a similar glow over Sunderland. The Christ who once walked these streets, and in search of whom we've come, is the same Christ whose powerful presence

shines out from the tabernacle in our churches. Sometimes the point of a pilgrimage is not to find something new, but to rediscover what you already have. What truth about Jesus do you need to rediscover?



**Our Lady of Mercy Parish**  
27 Bridge Street, Sunderland, SR1 1TQ  
(0191) 567 5354  
sunderland.ourladyofmercy@rcdhn.org.uk  
www.sunderlandcatholic.com  
St Mary's Church • 27 Bridge Street • Sunderland • SR1 1TQ  
St Cecilia's Church • Ryhope Road • Sunderland • SR2 7TG

Fr Christopher Hancock MHM • Parish Priest • christopher@sunderlandcatholic.com  
Fr Emmanuel Nuh Mbeh MHM • Assistant Priest • emmanuel.mbeh@diocesehn.org.uk  
Rev Eddy Barker • Parish Deacon  
  
Rebecca Leighton • Lay University Chaplain • rebecca@sunderlandcatholic.com  
Canon Alec Barras • Bishop Séamus Cunningham

 A parish of the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle  
Reg Charity 1143450

