



# parish newsletter

15 January 2023 | Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

## Behold the Lamb of God!



**Father John Muir**

When I was a kid, I remember the priest at Mass announcing, "The Lamb of God!" Frankly, it struck me as nonsense. I thought: Why in the world does God have a lamb? And where is this lamb?

John the Baptist sees Jesus coming toward him and announces, "Behold the lamb of God." His Jewish listeners knew what he meant. God's lamb is the thing that is sacrificed at the Jewish Passover and consumed by the participants. For almost a thousand years, lambs were ritually slaughtered and eaten in Jerusalem at Passover. The lamb meant sacrifice, freedom from sin, and communion with God. The Baptist is saying in effect, "This man will

be ritually sacrificed and consumed so that God's people may be free from sin and united to God."

It's crucial to relate to Jesus as a friend, brother, teacher, and Lord of our lives. But we should also learn to interact with Him as our lamb of God. That means we intentionally place on him our sins, sadnesses, and hopes, and offer him to God. Then we consume him to make us free. This is what we do at every Mass. That's why he is the Lamb of God.



18-25 January 2023

## Living the Paschal Mystery

In any given day we might see hundreds of people coming toward us. Most of them we pass by and hardly notice. Perhaps we might notice a flashy scarf or a designer handbag, or we might notice a tired and worn face or a furtive look, or we might notice someone struggling to walk steadily or perhaps someone with a seeing-eye dog. What we notice tends to be external marks or traits. A casual passing by would rarely, if ever, bring home to us an inner quality of a person, a set of moral values, a family tree. In this Sunday's gospel John the Baptist notices Jesus. But he doesn't note that he has long hair and a beard, or that he has a seamless cloak and

sandals, or that he has a crowd of people around him. John gets to the heart of things—he notices who Jesus is. This gospel is a testimony of what John has come to know about who Jesus is: Lamb of God, One who forgives sins, One who preexists, One who is Spirit-filled, One who baptises with the Holy Spirit, Son of God. This kind of recognising an identity does not come from a casual passing by; instead it comes from a deep, inner connection and relationship John has with Jesus. John has been noticing Jesus for a long time. But John's testimony does not exhaust the richness of Jesus' identity; there is even more.

John the Baptist unveils in

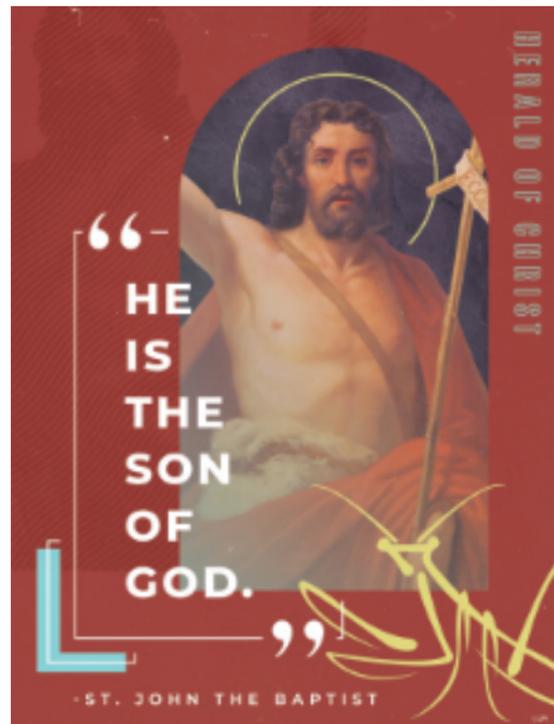
his relationship to Christ the posture of the church, which is to go from not knowing to seeing to testifying. We don't come to a onetime understanding of Christ. Our whole lives are spent beholding the Lamb of God, and in this very encounter we receive the Spirit and are commissioned to carry on Jesus' saving mission. The surprise of this gospel is that, as the Father entrusted to the beloved Son the work of salvation, by baptising us with the Holy Spirit Jesus entrusts to us this same saving mission. The mystery of who Jesus is continues to be revealed to us and through us today. What more are we discovering? What more are we revealing? Is Je-

sus more than a passerby to us?

Our baptismal task is to deepen continually our own understanding of who Jesus is and to make him known, and to deepen our own understanding of our Christian identity as the beloved daughters and sons of God, as the Body of Christ. Like John, we go from not knowing to seeing to testifying. More than likely, we aren't called to testify to the Son of God by going out and baptising or doing great things. We testify to Jesus' identity and carry forth his saving mission by being faithful to the ordinary things in life, by doing God's will (see the responsorial psalm). The revelation of Je-

sus' identity-how he is made known in the world—is mediated by the way we live every day.

Thus we, too, must become more fully the "Lamb of God." This means that, like Jesus, we must be willing to die to ourselves for the sake of others. Like John the Baptist to whom "Jesus [came] toward," opportunities to die to self come to us every day. Like John, we simply need to open our eyes to recognise and respond to opportunities to carry forth Jesus' ministry to others. Our own testimony to Jesus' Presence and our own understanding of who he is becomes known through the good we do for others.



## (Practicing) Catholic

### Showing Up

Colleen Jurkiewicz Dorman

I broke my foot once, when my second child was only 12 weeks old, and I was about to move houses. For six weeks I was confined to a chair, a shrieking newborn in my arms, a toddler running circles around me, and my right foot rendered useless by a plaster cast. I couldn't do anything without assistance. I couldn't eat or get a drink or change my clothes or feed my children.

My family was in dire straits. A lot of people offered

help, but there was a core group of friends and family members who really saved us. These are the people who turned up in my driveway with empty vans and cooked meals. These are the people who blocked off their Saturdays to haul furniture, mow our lawn, and run after unruly kids. These are the people who said: "Here I am. Give me a job."

If you've ever really, really needed another person's help, you know that "showing up" means more than saying: "Let me know what you need." It means saying: "I'm already here. Tell me what to do."

So often, I pay lip service to the idea of submission. "What do you want, God?" I ask, and I secretly hope that what He wants isn't one of those things that I'm not willing to give.

What if I really strove to "show up" for God? What if I was ready to give what He asks of me, whatever it is?

Here I am, Lord; I come to do your will. — Psalm 40

## Live the Liturgy

John the Baptist had been told that he would see the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world. He listened, he believed, and he kept his eyes open. He was ready when God revealed the truth. Let's ask ourselves: are our eyes open? Are we ready?





**First Reading:**  
I will make you a light to the nations; that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth. (Is 49:6)

**Psalm:**  
Here I am, Lord! I come to do your will. (Ps 39)

**Second Reading:**  
Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Cor 1:3)

**Gospel Acclamation:**  
Alleluia, alleluia! Blessings on the King who comes, in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest heavens! Alleluia!

**Gospel:**  
John the Baptist saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." (Jn 1:29)

14 Saturday	6.00 VIGIL MASS	St Cecilia's	Catherine & John McConville (RIP)
15 <b>SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME</b>	8.00 Morning Prayer	Mercy Chapel	
	9.00 MASS	Convent	Deceased Sisters of Oaklea
	10.30 MASS	St Mary's	Shaun Dover (RIP)
	5.00 MASS	St Mary's	People of the Parish
16 Monday	8.00 Morning Prayer	Mercy Chapel	
Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 16-25 January	9.30 MASS	Convent	Ints of Oaklea Sisters
	12.05 MASS	St Mary's	Sheila Burnikell (RIP)
	12.45 Chaplet of Divine Mercy	St Mary's	
	5.15 Evening Prayer	Mercy Chapel	
	6.30 Catholicism	Upper Room	
	8.00 Prayer Group	St Cecilia's	
17 Tuesday	8.00 Morning Prayer	Mercy Chapel	
Saint Antony, Abbot	9.30 MASS	Convent	Jane Gavin (RIP)
	12.05 MASS	St Mary's	Friends of Sunderland Seamen's Mission
	13.00 Over 60s	St Mary's Catholic Centre	
	5.15 Evening Prayer	Mercy Chapel	
18 Wednesday	8.00 Morning Prayer	Mercy Chapel	
	9.30 MASS	Convent	Ints of Theresa Foster
	12.05 MASS	St Mary's	Ints of Norah Flanagan
	5.15 Evening Prayer	Mercy Chapel	
	6.20 RCIA	Upper Room	
19 Thursday	8.00 Morning Prayer	Mercy Chapel	
Saint Wulstan, Bishop, Religious	9.30 MASS	Convent	Elsie Humphrey (RIP)
	10.00 Open House	St Mary's Catholic Centre	
	10.15 Confessions	St Cecilia's	
	10.30 MASS	St Cecilia's	Dec'd of Finn & Davies Families (RIP)
	12.05 MASS	St Mary's	Philomena Rogerston (RIP)
	5.00 Restore	Mercy Chapel & Upper Room	
20 Friday	8.00 Morning Prayer	Mercy Chapel	
Saint Fabian, Pope, Martyr or Saint Sebastian, Martyr	9.30 MASS	Convent	John Limer
	12.05 MASS	St Mary's	Dec'd Members of SVP
	12.45 Holy Rosary	St Mary's	
	5.15 Evening Prayer	Mercy Chapel	
21 Saturday	8.00 Morning Prayer	Mercy Chapel	
Saint Agnes, Virgin, Martyr	9.00 First Confessions	St Mary's	
	11.00 MASS	St Mary's	In Thanksgiving (DK)
	11.45 Confessions	St Mary's	
	6.00 VIGIL MASS	St Cecilia's	Ints of David Stephen Cook
22 <b>THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME</b>	8.00 Morning Prayer	Mercy Chapel	
	9.00 MASS	Convent	Ints of Sr M Raphael
	10.30 MASS	St Mary's	Lorraine Elizabeth Purdy (RIP)
	5.00 MASS	St Mary's	People of the Parish
	5.00 Parish Pastoral Council	Upper Room	



Marion, Dave, Neil, Paul, Andrew, Jacob, Stella, David, Alisa, Susan, Mary, Jack, Richard, Margaret, Moira, Gerry, Nick, Maur-een, Stella, Rose, Keith, Kelly, Kitty, Terry and Eileen  
Let us know if you would like a name added to the list.

## Announcements

**Mass at Oaklea**  
If you are attending Mass at Oaklea Convent, please use the back entrance via the gate and rear car park, rather than the main Convent entrance.

**First Confessions**  
We are celebrating first confession for our young parishioners this Saturday morning from 9am. Because of this, there will be no confessions before the 11am Mass, but af-

terwards as usual.

**Seamen's Mission**  
Sister Scholastica sends her heartfelt thanks to the friends of Sunderland Seamen's Mission and says that Mass will be offered in thanksgiving for you all.

**Sunderland v Middlesborough**  
Next Sunday there's a match between Sunderland and Middlesborough. Kick off is at 12.00 so expect the city centre



Stephen Smith

to be particularly busy that morning.

## Questions for the Week

**First Reading:** The prophet Isaiah spoke of how God, through Israel, would show his "glory" to all people and have his "salvation reach to the ends of the earth." What do you imagine the world will

look like when this happens?

**Second Reading:** Today's reading is the opening greeting of Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians. Paul tells the believers in Corinth that they (and

### Why do we do that?



**Question:** What is unique or different about the way Catholics read and are exposed to the Bible?

**Answer:** Catholics are exposed

to Scripture primarily through the Sunday readings from a book known as the Lectionary. The Lectionary is a book of selected passages from the Bible set in the context of a liturgical season, such as Advent, Lent, or ordinary time. There are four readings assigned to any Sunday: the first reading (usually from the Old Testament), the responsorial psalm, the second reading (usually from a New Testament letter), and the Gospel

all believers) are "sanctified" (blessed) and "called to be holy." What do you think it takes to be blessed and holy?

**Gospel:** In today's Gospel reading we hear John the Baptist testify that Jesus is the Son of God. If you had the

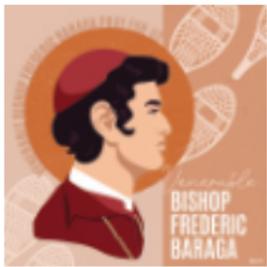
reading.

These readings together give them a new context. The selected readings relate to one another in a unique manner that is not present in the Bible text itself. In close proximity to each other, these readings now have the opportunity to converse with each other in a way that would have not been possible before. A homilist pays attention to all four readings, preparing a reflection that

speaks of this conversation among the readings, enabling us to zero in on what this unique combination of God's word has to say to us this particular Sunday.

Next time you attend Sunday liturgy, try reading the Scripture ahead of time and see how this new relationship among the readings addresses and challenges you to be a better Christian here and now.

## Saint of the Week



Known as the Snowshoe Priest during his lifetime, Venerable Bishop Frederic Baraga was a lifelong missionary to Native American people in the Northern Midwest of the United States. As an immigrant to the United States and

to the native populations he was stationed with, he'd often choose to use the mode(s) of transportation used by those he served. This devotion resulted in him trekking hundreds of miles every year using the Ojibwe's main forms of transportation—snowshoes and canoes.

Barga was an incredibly skilled linguist. He understood the importance of knowing the written and spoken language of whatever community he served and, so, became fluent in Ojibwe and Odawa, a dialect of Ojibwe

spoken by the Ottawa people. He authored the very first Ojibwe-English dictionary and he also authored the first ever book published in the Ottawa language. His love for languages was inspired, in part, by his love of the people he served. Over his lifetime he converted over 1000 people, natives and European settlers, to Christianity. He became the first bishop of Marquette, seated in the Upper Michigan Diocese in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Upon his death only a couple years after being ordained bishop, even a snow blizzard couldn't keep hundreds of

friends and mourners from paying their respects in person.

After his death, devotees started the Bishop Baraga Association. Over one hundred years later, in 1972, the Association presented reams of research and testimony to an official Church committee in Marquette to open the Cause for his sainthood. Following this, the Vatican officially recognised Baraga as a "Servant of God," and he is now being considered for Catholic sainthood.

## Play That One Again

Tracy Earl Welliver, MTS

How many times have you sung the church song, "Here I Am, Lord"? If you grew up Catholic and are around my age (still 50!), the answer is more than you can count. The song that quotes various verses of Scripture is sung using guitar, piano, or organ, by cantors and choirs, in traditional and modern churches. It is truly a Catholic greatest hit of the modern Church. The question is how many times when singing the refrain have you really taken to heart what you were singing.

"Here I am, Lord; is it I, Lord? I have heard you calling in the night." Like the biblical figure Samuel, we are responding to the call of God by asking for clarification that we are in-

deed the one being called. We then follow up the question with a profound statement: "I will go if You lead me."

It is profound because we are pledging to our God that we are willing to go wherever He wants. We are accepting the challenge to become mature disciples who respond to the call of Jesus Christ regardless of the cost. We have sung this pledge repeatedly for many years.

We never have any idea what God will call us to do and where to go. Sometimes the request can ask us for quite a lot. Hopefully, we respond like a mature disciple. If not, maybe we should reflect more the next time this song is played. The melody will not allow for the words, "I will see if I am busy and then decide to go if you lead me." Then again, I don't want to sing that to God, the source of all life anyway. Do you?

## Flock Notes

How do we Catholics know that the bread and wine at Mass actually become the Body and Blood of Christ?

Well, for me, when I was 7 and preparing for my First Holy Communion, Sr Marietta, who was my teacher, told us it was. Sr Marietta had a certain authority about her, and even at 7 we knew enough not to question what she said! For many years, I suppose, that was enough to believe. However, as authoritative as Sr Marietta was, our Eucharistic faith is built upon more even than that.

At Mass, just before Holy Communion we do two things that really help us understand that Christ is now present under the form of bread and wine: we break the host and pray the Lamb of God.

On the evening of Easter Sunday, at Emmaus, after their long walk, two disciples

sat down with a stranger. However, the moment he broke the bread they realised he wasn't a stranger but the Risen Lord. We do exactly the same at every Mass to really bring home the fact that Jesus is present just as he was on that first day of the resurrection.

At the same time as we break the bread we sing or say 'Lamb of God...' We make our own the words John the Baptist uses in today's gospel to let his disciples know they were in the presence of the Messiah.

These two actions let us know that our faith is true and Jesus really is present, just as he said would be. Perhaps this Sunday you can look for the breaking of bread and pray the Lamb of God in a special way and welcome Jesus.



## Our Lady of Mercy Parish

27 Bridge Street, Sunderland, SR1 1TQ  
(0191) 567 5354  
office@sunderlandcatholic.com  
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 Barrass • Bishop Séamus Cunningham



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

