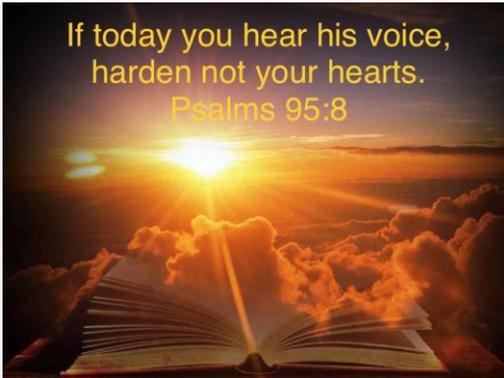




Coloma Catholic Life.



If today you hear his voice,
harden not your hearts.
Psalms 95:8



Racial Justice Sunday – 31st January

This year's Racial Justice Sunday is more important than ever. The effects of the Coronavirus pandemic, the killing of George Floyd, and the powerful message on fraternity and equality by Pope Francis in [Fratelli Tutti](#) speak of the need to actively oppose racism and pursue racial justice with renewed vigour.

Theme

The theme is '*A Time to Act*'. Racial issues and inequalities were identified nationally and internationally in 2020 generating awareness, emotion and outrage. In light of this Racial Justice Sunday 2021 is particularly significant. Action is needed to further the cause of racial justice but what can be done? Read a [reflection on the theme](#).

Resources

As well as a thought-provoking [reflection on the theme](#), there is a [message from Bishop Paul McAleenan](#), the Lead Bishop for Racial Justice, and a series of poignant videos. We also have a prayer to bring this important work to the Lord.



Zimbabwean Catholic Youth

We have a video reflection produced by a diverse group of young adults from across England and Wales who belong to the Zimbabwean Catholic Community. They are either in full-time education or work in leading professions. [Watch the short film](#).



Pope Francis

Prayer Intention for February:

Violence against women.

'We pray for women who are victims of violence, that they may be protected by society and have their sufferings considered and heeded.'

Video:

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/Pope/news/2021-01/Pope-s-january-prayer-intention-at-the-service-of-fraternity.html>

Tweet: 'When we read the Gospel by ourselves with an open heart, a little of its light and beneficial power always reaches us, enlightening, healing, consoling.'

Liturgical Year

Week: 4th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Colour: Green

Parish Discussion

An important parish discussion on a broad range of issues concerned with racial justice to raise awareness in the local catholic community and to bring about change. [Watch](#).

Competition

The Columban Missionary Society has launched a schools' competition to encourage students aged between 14-18 to use their media skills to engage with an issue that addresses equality, justice, inclusion and also draws on faith and personal experience. Details below.

Columban Missionary Society Image and Writing Competition



'Let's Create a World Without Racism' is the theme for a schools' competition launched by the Columban Missionary Society. It is open to young people aged 14-18. You can learn more about the competition, closing date: 20th February 2021) and the Columbans here:

<https://columbans.co.uk/education/4919/columbans-launch-schools-media-competition-endracism/>

Archdiocese of Southwark

In the Archdiocese of Southwark, Archbishop John Wilson responded to this year's theme: 'A Time to Act', by creating a new diocesan Commission for Promoting Racial and Cultural Inclusion, which will be chaired by Fr Victor Darlington, Parish Priest of Camberwell. The 10-strong Commission team, which also includes Bishop Pat Lynch, Deacon Alfred Banya and Canon Jim Cronin among others, was formally inaugurated on Friday 29th January 2021. Looking ahead, it will seek to identify, address and speak out against the evil of racism where it exists, and also explore ways to listen, accompany and support victims of racism, with a view to eliminating this infringement on human dignity.



Speaking of the new Commission and Racial Justice Sunday, Fr Darlington said: *The road map of the Commission is to work with parishes, groups, associations and schools to promote racial equality and inclusion in our Archdiocese over the coming months and years. We all have a role to play to put an end to racism, and I call on everyone on this Racial Justice Sunday, to celebrate the beauty of our diversity as a Archdiocese, where everyone is welcomed, appreciated, cherished and loved.*

Please pray for the members of the new Southwark Commission for Promoting Racial and Cultural Inclusion, that their work will ensure peoples of all nations are valued.

Pope Francis Announcement Today - 31st January 2021

To be celebrated throughout the Church on the 4th Sunday of July.

After praying the midday Angelus on January 31, Pope Francis announced that he is establishing a **World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly**. This day will be celebrated throughout the Church every year on the fourth Sunday in July, he said. This date places it close to the July 26 feast of Sts. Joachim and Ann, the parents of Mary, and thus the grandparents of Jesus. The Pope made the announcement noting the upcoming feast of the Presentation in the Temple (February 2), when the elderly Simeon and Anna recognized the Child Jesus as the Saviour of the world.



The Pope said:

“The day after tomorrow, 2 February, we will celebrate the feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, when Simeon and Anna, both elderly, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, recognised Jesus as the Messiah. The Holy Spirit still stirs up thoughts and words of wisdom in the elderly today: Their voice is precious because it sings the praises of God and safeguards the roots of peoples. They remind us that old age is a gift and that grandparents are the link between generations, passing on the experience of life and faith to the young. Grandparents are often forgotten and we forget this wealth of preserving roots and passing on. For this reason, I have decided to establish *World Grandparents’ and Elders’ Day*, which will be held in all the Church every year on the fourth Sunday of July, close to the feast of Saints Joachim and Anne, Jesus’ “grandparents.” It is important for grandparents to meet their grandchildren and for grandchildren to meet their grandparents, because – as the prophet Joel says – grandparents, before their grandchildren, will dream, and have great desires, and young people, taking strength from their grandparents, will go forward and prophesy. And 2 February is indeed the feast of the encounter between grandparents and their grandchildren.”



The Presentation of the Lord (Candlemas) – 2nd February



According to the Church’s liturgical calendar, the feast held on Feb. 2 each year is in honour of the Presentation of the Lord. Some Catholics recall this day as the feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary because such was the feast day named until the 1969 changes in the Church’s calendar.

According to Luke’s Gospel, the presentation of Jesus and the purification of the Blessed Mother took place in the Temple on the same day, and both are remembered

during Mass on February 2nd. Also, in several countries, Candlemas is simultaneously celebrated on this day and involves a candlelight procession that was popularized in the Middle Ages. Until the Second Vatican Council the feasts on February 2nd ended the Christmas season. Today, the season ends in January on the feast of the Baptism of our Lord.

As early as the fourth century Christians commemorated the presentation of Jesus in the Temple, but, at the time, there was no feast name attached. In seventh-century Rome, the Church named the celebration the feast of the Purification of the Blessed Mother Mary, and it remained that way for nearly 1,300 years. In the reforms after Vatican II, the feast was given a stronger focus on Jesus (by stressing the Presentation of Jesus), but clearly the events of purification and presentation that took place when Jesus was 40 days old (see Lk 2:22-39) are tied together and thus commemorated together.

Purification and Presentation

Under Mosaic law found in the Old Testament Book of Leviticus, a Jewish woman who gave birth to a child was considered unclean (Lev 12:1-8). The mother of a newborn could not routinely go out into public and had to avoid all things sacred, including the Temple. If her child was a male, this exclusion lasted for 40 days. If the child was female, the period lasted 80 days. This was a ceremonial seclusion and not the result of sin or some kind of wrongdoing on the part of the mother.

At the end of the 40 or 80 days the woman presented herself at the Temple to be purified. If the baby was her firstborn male child, the infant was brought along to the Temple to be dedicated to the Lord. The law in Exodus specifies that the first male child belongs to God (Exod 13:2-16). This law is a tribute to God for His sparing the firstborn Israelite males during the time of the Exodus from Egypt. The firstborn Egyptian male children, of course, were not spared. The mother's purification ritual obliged her to bring, or purchase at the Temple, a lamb and a turtledove as sacrificial offerings. The lamb was offered in thanksgiving to God for the successful birth of the child; the turtledove was a sin offering. Families that could not afford a lamb could bring two pigeons or two turtledoves. After these animals were sacrificed, the Temple priest prayed over the woman and she could once again resume her normal role or status. Mary submitted to the requirements of the law. She remained at home for 40 days, denied herself all association with sacred things and on the day required from Bethlehem to the Temple in Jerusalem.

Nunc Dimittis

In Luke's Gospel, Jesus, Mary and Joseph go to the Temple offering two turtledoves for Mary's purification. Along with Mary's purification, Jesus is presented into the hands of the priest and thus to God. In accordance with the Old Testament, the child was blessed and then bought or ransomed back by the family who would pay five shekels into the Temple treasury. The Saviour of the world is ransomed in the manner of every other Hebrew boy. *"When the days were completed for their purification according to the law of Moses, they took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, just as it is written in the law of the Lord, 'Every male that opens the womb shall be consecrated to the Lord'"* (Lk 2:22-24; Nm 18:15-16).

The Gospel of Luke explains that the old prophet Simeon and the prophetess Anna were at the Temple that day. They, like many others, had spent their lifetime waiting, longing for a Messiah, and the Holy Spirit had revealed to Simeon that he would not die until he had seen the Saviour. Among all the children and mothers

coming into the Temple, Simeon recognized Jesus as the Christ Child; he held Jesus and exclaimed this hymn of thanksgiving, *“Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared in sight of all the peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel”* (2:29-32). The hymn has traditionally been termed the *Nunc Dimittis*, from the Latin, *“Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine, secundum verbum tuum in pace.”*

The Holy Family must have experienced great joy, even wonder at all that had happened to them. Consider the events of the previous weeks. First, the shepherds miraculously arrived to adore and praise Jesus on the night He was born. Now, Simeon, another stranger, singles out Jesus as the Saviour, not only of Israel but of the world. Someday all the other children being presented will know Jesus as their Saviour. But here in the Temple there is also pain. The old prophet, moved by the Holy Spirit, tells Mary that she will experience unspeakable grief because of the way the world would judge and treat her Son. Mary remained always committed to God’s will and to her Son.

The Nunc Dimittis is prayed every day in Compline as part of the Liturgy of the Hours.

A version of the Nunc Dimittis:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cMNs9O55tpk&list=RD8vtHBGOz_Ns&index=2

Annual World Day for Consecrated Life



In 1997 St John Paul II instituted an Annual Day of Prayer for Women and Men in Consecrated Life. He chose 2nd February to coincide with the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple - Candlemas Day - the day on which candles are blessed symbolising Christ who is the Light of the World. We are all called to reflect the light of Jesus Christ to the world, but women and men in Religious Congregations and those in other forms of Consecrated Life do this by means of their commitment to the community life and the charisms of their specific Founders and Foundresses.

This year Archbishop Wilson had hoped to make it an even more special day when he would deliver conferences in the Amigo Hall to the assembled Religious - with lunch - and a Mass to conclude the day. Sadly, present lockdown restrictions have meant that this cannot take place.

However, the Archbishop has very kindly agreed to offer Mass online in the Cathedral on Tuesday 2nd February at 2.30pm to celebrate the Feast and to mark the Annual Day for Consecrated Life. He wishes to use this opportunity to acknowledge and thank the Religious Communities who live and work in the Archdiocese for all they have done, are doing and will continue to do to build up the Kingdom of God in our world.

On Tuesday 2nd February at 5.00pm [Rome Time] Pope Francis will celebrate the same occasion with Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica with a small representative group of Religious living in the City of Rome present.

This Mass for Religious, to be celebrated by Archbishop John Wilson from St George's Cathedral, will be streamed at 2.30 pm on Tuesday 2nd February 2020 at <https://youtu.be/KOhtuFAd-Xc>

Feast of St Blaise - The ritual of the blessing of throats

In many places on the feast of St Blaise people gather in churches for the blessing of throats. The blessing is a sign of the people's faith in God's protection and love for the sick. Using two crossed and unlighted candles, the priest (or other minister) touches the throat of each person, saying: *Through the intercession of Saint Blaise, Bishop and martyr, may God deliver you from all ailments of the throat and from every other evil: + In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*



Usually, the blessing takes place during Mass. It follows the homily and the prayer of the faithful. If done outside of Mass, a brief celebration of the word of God with the scripture readings suggested in the Lectionary is recommended before the blessing is given.

Chaplaincy and Youth Work Apprenticeship for September 2021.

The Education Commission are now in the planning process with St Mary's University to develop a **Chaplaincy and Youth Work Apprenticeship for September 2021**. If you know anyone who might be thinking about being a Chaplain or Youth Worker, please ask them to register their interest on our website <https://www.rcaoseducation.org.uk/chaplaincy-apprenticeship/>

Christian Leadership Formation

A new programme is being offered to Lower-Sixth students who are committed to their faith and who are aspiring to some form of public life. The programme was conceived of by The Lord Alton of Liverpool, is being offered by The Christian Heritage Centre in partnership with St Mary's University, Twickenham (London), the Catholic Union of Great Britain, and other Catholic organisations and academics. It will consist of several residential modules offering philosophical and theological formation, as well as important practical skills and insights. This year's programme commences in July, and applications are now open until 31st March.

For further information and for the application pack, visit: <https://christianheritagecentre.com/clf/> or contact clf@christianheritagecentre.com

Saints of the Week

St Blaise – 3rd February



St Blaise was the Bishop of Sebastea (today, Sivas, Turkey) and a doctor. The first known record of his life comes from the medical writings of Aëtius Amidenus, where he is recorded as helping with patients suffering from objects stuck in their throat. Many of the miraculous aspects of St. Blaise's life are written of 400 years after his martyrdom in the "Acts of St. Blaise." He is believed to have begun as a healer but, eventually, he became a "physician of souls." He lived a life of a hermit in a cave, where he remained in prayer. People often turned to him for healing miracles. He suffered imprisonment for being a Christian, when Bishop of Sebastea and was eventually tortured and executed in about 316AD.

Saint Agatha, Virgin & Martyr - 5th February

St Agatha of Sicily was born at Catania, Sicily of noble birth. She rejected the advances of Quintianus, Governor of Sicily and, as a result, was charged with being a Christian and brought before the tribunal. When asked about her origin she declared, "I am noble-born, of a distinguished family, as all my relatives will attest." When asked why she lived the life of a Christian she replied, "I am a handmaid of Christ, and that is why I bear the outward appearance of a slave; yet this is the highest nobility, to be a slave to Christ." Agatha was tortured greatly but refused to renounce her faith. She was sent to prison where she offered her dying prayer, "O Lord Jesus Christ, good Master, I give You thanks that You granted me victory over the executioners' tortures. Grant now that I may happily dwell in Your never-ending glory." St Agatha's grave is venerated at Catania in Sicily. Her name is included among the saints in the Roman Canon (The First Eucharistic Prayer).



Saints Paul Miki and his Companions, Martyrs – 6th February



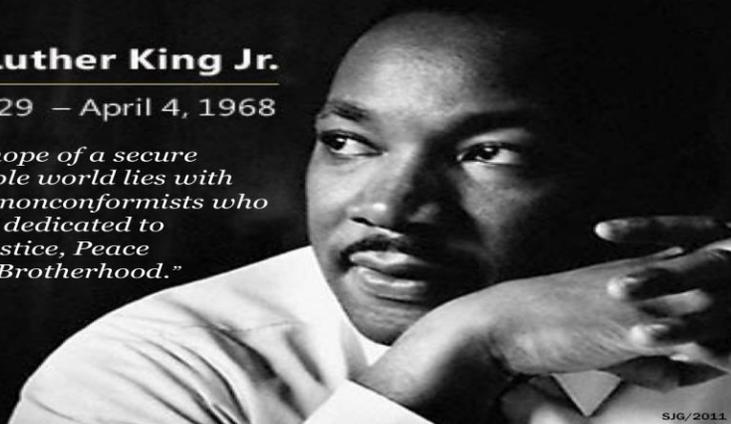
In 1593 Franciscan missionaries came to Japan and zealously gave themselves to the work of charity and evangelisation, but suspicion against them grew after a Spanish ship carrying artillery was seized off the Japanese coast. This gave Toyotomi Hideyoshi an excuse to persecute the Church and sentenced 26 Catholics to death by crucifixion. The group comprised three Japanese Jesuits, six foreign Franciscans and several lay Catholics including children. They were marched 600 miles to the city of Nagasaki. On the journey they suffered public torture, an attempt to frighten others in to denying their faith. One of the group, St Paul Miki, was a Japanese Jesuit brother

training for the priesthood. As he hung on the cross he preached to the crowds: "The only reason for my being killed is that I have taught the doctrine of Christ, I thank God it is for this reason that I die. I believe that I am telling the truth before I die. After Christ's example, I forgive my persecutors. I do not hate them. I ask God to have pity on all, and I hope my blood will fall on my fellow men as a fruitful rain." St. Paul Miki and his 25 companions were stabbed to death with lances on Feb. 5, 1597, at the site that became known as "Martyrs' Hill." Pope Pius IX canonized the Martyrs of Nagasaki in 1862.

Martin Luther King Jr.

Jan. 15, 1929 – April 4, 1968

"The hope of a secure and livable world lies with disciplined nonconformists who are dedicated to Justice, Peace and Brotherhood."



SJG/2011