

**PARISH OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL & ST SIMON STOCK, CARMELITE CHURCH**  
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**Priests in the Parish:** Fr Thaddeus Ekuma ocd, Fr Matt Blake ocd,  
Fr Tijo Xavier ocd, Fr Theophilus Nyamali, ocd

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**6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter – 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2022**

**Pray As You Are**

Today we read about the first crucial meeting of the early church in Jerusalem. It was important to decide whether Christianity was to be localized in Jerusalem among the Jews or it was open to non-Jews as well. Paul, as we know, made himself an apostle to the non-Jews (gentiles) and a great number of non-Jews who Paul evangelized became believers in Jesus.

There was a problem. Jewish believers in Jesus (Jewish Christians) continued more or less to practice Judaism. For example, they still went to the synagogue and continued to visit the temple in Jerusalem. Many of them believed that the mark of a Jew, that is circumcision, was indispensable in order to be fully Christian. In other words, some of them believed that Christianity was only for those who observed the prescriptions of the law. But if this is the case, how would the non-Jews (who are uncircumcised) that Paul had preached to and converted become Christians? This was the crisis that triggered the meeting in Jerusalem. From the testimonies of Paul and Barnabas as well as Peter, the gentiles had clearly received the gift of Christ's Spirit. Was that not enough for them to be called Christians? Was faith in Jesus not enough to make a person Christian? These were the issues at stake.

After much reflection, the elders in Jerusalem agreed that faith in Jesus was enough to make a person Christian. The gentiles were not to be burdened with the prescriptions of the law, and certainly not circumcision. This important historical declaration paved way for the worldwide outreach of Christianity.

The understanding that Christianity would transcend any particular culture was always the intention of Our Lord. He won salvation for the whole world not just for a particular people. Many decades after the meeting in Jerusalem, St John would write in the Apocalypse about the New Jerusalem, the bride of Christ, as having twelve gates facing the four quarters of the compass indicating that it embraces the whole universe and transcends every culture.

Our God comes to us as we are. Just as he came to the Jews, he came to the Gentiles, and he comes to us today. He comes into our peculiar situations, into our shared as well as personal cultures. He comes to purify all that is tainted in order to prepare us for heaven. It is his love that purifies us. He has declared, as St John records in the Gospel, that it is by the love that we show to one another that people will know that we are his disciples. It is by that love which comes from faith in Christ. So it is by faith in Jesus that we are made Christians, not by belonging to any particular culture. The figurative New Jerusalem in the Apocalypse further buttresses this point. The vastness of the city is unimaginable: a cube of 1,500 miles in each direction was hard to imagine at a time when even half of the earth as we know it now was not yet discovered. In this city, there is no need for light and warmth of the sun, the Lord alone is its light. No need for a temple, for wherever the Spirit of the Lord dwells he sanctifies to become his temple.

Hear the words of Jesus in the Gospel: 'If anyone loves me he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we shall come to him and make our home with him.' In other words, Our Lord dwells in us through faith and love. The elders in Jerusalem were right to declare that the Gentiles did not need to be Jews in order to be Christians. All they needed was to dwell in the love of Christ among them. By the love they showed to one another, people would know they are Jesus' disciples. We who are Christians today are so through our faith and baptism. Let us dwell in love so that God may make his home in us. Amen.

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## NOTICES

### **The Encounter Festival**

Our Carmelite Priory in Oxford is organising a weekend of encounter with self, God and others intended for those between 25 – 35 years old. The Encounter Festival is meant help you discover God as a dear friend and deepen your prayer life as well as find others to walk alongside you on the journey. Date is 29 – 31 July 2022. For registration and programme details, please visit the website [www.carmelite.uk.net/retreats/encounter-festival/](http://www.carmelite.uk.net/retreats/encounter-festival/)

### **Pulse Family Retreat Weekend**

Registrations for PULSE Family retreat weekend 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> June are open:  
Friday 10<sup>th</sup> 6:30pm until Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> June 4pm @ SPEC Centre, Pinner HA5 3EP  
Children 0-12 years old are welcome. Organised for families by families. The retreat is structured around times of teaching and personal prayer for parents.  
Fr Matt Blake, Carmelite, will help the parents (re)discover the power of prayer.  
Children participate in a school of prayer specially tailored to their age, under the responsibility of volunteers.  
If you would like to register or just know a little bit more, please visit our website:  
<https://www.pulse-retreats.com/catholic-family-retreat-june-2022>

### **Solemnity of the Ascension**

Thursday this week is the Solemnity of the Ascension of Our Lord. Masses will be as usual on weekdays: 8.00am, 12.15pm and 6.00pm

### **Volunteer for CAFOD**

CAFOD is currently looking for volunteers in our parish, with good public speaking skills, who want to help us tackle poverty and injustice. Full training will be provided, no previous experience is necessary. For further details, call Tony Sheen on 020 8449 6970 or email: [tsheen@cafod.org.uk](mailto:tsheen@cafod.org.uk).

### **Vacancies at St Richard Reynolds Catholic College**

St Richard Reynolds are currently advertising some teacher vacancies. The current vacancies are Primary School Teacher and Teacher of Design Technology. For more information please visit their website [www.strichardreynolds.org.uk/our-college/vacancies](http://www.strichardreynolds.org.uk/our-college/vacancies)

<b><u>Collections Last Sunday</u></b>	Offering	£946
	Gift Aid Envelopes	£109

Thank you for your generosity

*Fr. Thaddeus, OCD*