SUNDAY NEWSLETTER

6th Sunday of Easter **25th May 2025**

PARISH OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL & ST SIMON STOCK, CARMELITE CHURCH
41 KENSINGTON CHURCH STREET, LONDON W8 4BB

Web: www.carmelitechurch.org Email: enquiries@carmelitechurch.org
Tel. 0207 937 9866 Mobile: 0770 8203 595
@kensingtoncarmelitechurch on Facebook, Twitter & Instagram

Mass Times Sundays: Vigil (Sat.) 6.00 p.m., 8.30 a.m., 10.00 a.m., 12.15 p.m. & 6.00 p.m.
Weekdays (including Bank Holidays): 8.00 a.m., 12.15 p.m. & 6.00 p.m.
Livestream *(All Masses)*: www.carmelitechurch.org & YouTube: "Kensington Carmelite Church"
Confessions: Sat: 11.30 a.m. – 12.15 p.m. & 5.00 - 5.50 p.m. Weekdays: 5.40 p.m. - 6.00 p.m.
Priests in the Parish: Fr Thaddeus Ekuma, Fr Matt Blake, Fr John Williamson, Fr Joseph Odiahi
Safeguarding Rep: Franca Bren (Email: kensington2sg1@safeguardrcdow.org.uk)

Reflection

FAITH IN JESUS UNITES US

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 as 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 the 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.

To follow the Mass Readings on your phone, please scan the QR Code:

NOTICES

Archbishop-elect John Sherrington has made a statement after the Private Member's Bill seeking to legalise assisted suicide entered its Report Stage on Friday, 16 May 2025.

Statement

On 16 May, the Report Stage of the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill began in Parliament.

The Catholic Bishops of England and Wales have consistently maintained that the bill is wrong in principle as well as being fundamentally flawed. Moreover, the parliamentary process used for this bill has been shown to be woefully inadequate and has lacked time for proper and sustained debate. Information about the bill and its amendments has been repeatedly published very close to key debates, leaving MPs with insufficient time for consideration. During the Report Stage, MPs had only five hours to discuss nearly 60 pages of amendments.

We are deeply concerned that parliament has rejected an amendment which would have allowed hospices and care homes not to participate in any way in assisted suicide. If this bill should pass, we have serious concerns about the ability of Catholic hospices and care homes to function effectively and continue delivering high-quality palliative care. We are also concerned that people will find it difficult to find institutions where they can feel safe. Hospices and care homes will not be able to prevent an employee from facilitating assisted suicide. Further, there is no guarantee that NHS or local authority funding will not in the future be tied to the provision of assisted suicide by care homes and hospices.

I am grateful to Sarah Olney MP for pointing out that assisted suicide undermines the mission and purpose of hospices and care homes and that "they should have the right to refuse to provide it on their premises if they do not wish to participate in it". Edward Leigh MP raises the concern that: "If, according to the Minister, care homes run by religious orders will have to provide this service, those orders will have to get out of care homes altogether." This is an alarming prospect which reduces freedom in our society.

I have grave reservations about the proposed amendment to give a wider range of professionals increased opt outs from being involved with assisted suicide. Experience shows that even where medical professionals are granted conscientious objection to assisted suicide, their ability to opt out is later restricted as access to provision takes precedence.

As the bill approaches its third reading, I urge Catholics and all people of goodwill to take action by praying and contacting your MP to raise awareness about the irreversible harm this bill would cause. MPs must have proper time to debate a law which fundamentally changes society. This has not happened and so the Bill must be rejected. ***Please join Religious Communities on a peaceful protest on 13th June, standing in solidarity outside the Houses of Parliament. Time: 8.30am @ Old Palace Yard, by the statue of George V, SW1P 3JY***

You may make your offering or donation by scanning this QR Code with your mobile phone
Thank you and God bless!

Collections Last Sunday:	Offering	£1609
	Gift Aid Envelopes	£137

Thank you for your generosity!

Fr Thaddeus