**THOUGHT FOR THE DAY**

None of us is as smart as all of us.  
Ken Blanchard

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

*O sing a new song to the Lord, for he has worked wonders; in the sight of the nations he has shown his deliverance, alleluia!*

**FIRST READING** (Acts 9: 26-31)

When Saul got to Jerusalem he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him: they could not believe he was really a disciple. Barnabas, however, took charge of him, introduced him to the apostles, and explained how the Lord had appeared to Saul and spoken to him on his journey, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. Saul now started to go round with them in Jerusalem, preaching fearlessly in the name of the Lord. But after he had spoken to the Hellenists, and argued with them, they became determined to kill him. When the brothers knew, they took him to Caesarea, and sent him off from there to Tarsus. The disciples, but they were all afraid of him: they could not believe he was really a disciple. Barnabas, however, took charge of him, introduced him to the apostles, and explained how the Lord had appeared to Saul and spoken to him on his journey, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. Saul now started to go round with them in Jerusalem, preaching fearlessly in the name of the Lord. But after he had spoken to the Hellenists, and argued with them, they became determined to kill him. When the brothers knew, they took him to Caesarea, and sent him off from there to Tarsus. The churches throughout Judaea, Galilee and Samaria were now left in peace, building themselves up, living in the fear of the Lord, and filled with the consolation of the Holy Spirit.

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM** (Psalm 21)

Response: *You Lord, are my praise in the great assembly.*

1 My vows I will pay before those who fear him.  
The poor shall eat and shall have their fill.

They shall praise the Lord, those who seek him.  
May their hearts live for ever and ever.

2 All the earth shall remember and return to the Lord,  
all families of the nations worship before him.  
They shall worship him, all the mighty of the earth;  
before him shall bow all who go down to the dust

3 And my soul shall live for him, my children serve him.  
They shall tell of the Lord to generations yet to come,  
declare his faithfulness to peoples yet unborn:  
“These things the Lord has done.”

**2nd READING** (1 John 3: 18-24)

My children, our love is not to be just words or mere talk, but something real and active; only by this can we be certain that we are the children of the truth and be able to quieten our conscience in his presence, whatever accusations it may raise against us, because God is greater than our conscience and he knows everything. My dear people, if we cannot be condemned by our own conscience, we need not be afraid in God's presence, and whatever we ask him, we shall receive, because we keep his commandments and live the kind of life that he wants. His commandments are these: that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and that we love one another as he told us to. Whoever keeps his commandments lives in God and God lives in him. We know that he lives in us by the Spirit that he has given us.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

*Alleluia, alleluia! Make your home in me, as I make mine in you. Whoever remains in me bears fruit in plenty, alleluia!*

**THE GOSPEL** (John 15: 1-8)

Jesus said to his disciples: 'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that bears no fruit he cuts away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes to make it bear even more. You are pruned already, by means of the word that I have spoken to you. Make your home in me, as I make mine in you. As a branch cannot bear fruit all by itself, but must remain part of the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me, with me in him, bears fruit in plenty; for cut off from me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in me is like a branch that has been thrown away - he withers; these branches are collected and thrown on the fire, and they are burnt. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask what you will and you shall get it. It is to the glory of my Father that you should bear much fruit, and then you will be my disciples.'

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON**

*I am the true vine and you are the branches, says the Lord. Whoever remains in me and I in him, bears fruit in plenty, alleluia!*

**Branching Out**

There’s a lot of work to do in today’s world. Almost daily, the TV and Radio brings terrible news of atrocities and disasters around the planet. It’s easy to feel overwhelmed by all the bad news and to feel powerless to do anything. We do not consider that we can individually instigate change for lots of reasons. We do not feel clever enough, or brave enough or rich enough. In short it’s hard to know where to begin and even whether change is possible. The inspirational message in today’s gospel is that we can make changes as long as we work together.

We are already familiar with the ethos of trade unions. Trade unions operate on one powerful principal. Individually we can be easily overlooked but together we have the power to bring the whole country to a stand-still and sway governments. If a trade union wanted to promote solidarity and unity, the vine would make an ideal logo. The vine itself is the heart of the union, the part that determines the ethos. The branches do the work of the vine and the fruit they bear is the outcome … the final result.

Today we are told that with Christ as our vine we can do great things. All too often we become wrapped up in developing our own spirituality, trying to work out what God means to us as an individual … striving to find our niche. It’s easy to forget that we are part of a huge family of people the biggest union on the planet. With Christ’s teaching and pruning, we as a body, have the ability to transform the world by putting faith into action. Our individual responsibility is to look for ways in which we can become part of...
the overall plan. We don’t have to branch out alone; we branch out as a team.

 Voting For A ‘Good Society’
 Churches Together in England and Ireland have drawn up a vision of a how we might see ‘a Good Society in 2020’. We are asked to visualise a future where all citizens have access to enough income to enable them to live with dignity; a future where homes are affordable; a future where young people are valued; a future where carbon emissions are reduced; a future that is just. How would each of us determine a ‘good society’? How will that affect how we vote on May 7th?

www.ctbi.org.uk

Pope Francis’s Prayer Intention for May
It has been said that the opposite to love is not hate but indifference. At least when we are angry about something we are engaging. Emotions of any kind mean we care. Indifference to the world around us means that we feel nothing, and that we have given up caring. This month Pope Francis urges us to imagine ourselves into someone else’s life. We are asked to feel something for others, because only then will we do something. We are asked to join in Pope Francis’ prayer intention for May

“......that, rejecting the culture of indifference, we may care for our neighbours who suffer, especially the sick and the poor.”

 Peace Actions for May
Many still think of May as Mary’s month. Remember this month to pray the Rosary for peace.

There are a couple of dates coming up where we are invited to think of the planet. Walk to Work Week 11th-15th May; Walk to School Week 18th-22nd May; and World Environment Day on 5th June.

There are a couple of dates coming where we are asked to consider our neighbours. World Fair Trade Day 9th May; World Day for Cultural Diversity on 21st May; and World Hunger Day on the 28th May.

And a couple of opportunities to think about the ways we work to keep the peace. World Communications Day on 17th May; and the International Day of UN Peacekeepers on 29th May.

World Fair Trade Day 9th May
Be An Agent for Change.
‘Be an agent for change...’ That can mean thinking about long term changes in your own shopping habits, or it can mean changing the perceptions of the people you live and work with you. This day could prompt you to add one more fair-trade product to your shopping basket on a regular basis, or it could mean hosting a fair-trade dinner or a ‘fairtrade’ stall in your place of work. Be as imaginative as you can, but make it about real and lasting change.

Remembrance and Reconciliation May 8th-9th
The Time of Remembrance and Reconciliation for Those Who Lost Their Lives during the Second World War (May 8 and May 9) is an annual international day of remembrance designated by the United Nations General Assembly. On this date we are asked to pay tribute to the victims of World War II. It begins on May 8, the anniversary of the date when the World War II Allies accepted the unconditional surrender of the armed forces of Nazi Germany and the end of Adolf Hitler’s Third Reich.

ANNIVERSARIES

Please pray for all those who have died recently. Please also remember those whose anniversaries occur at this time: Phyllis Hollingworth, Albert Byrne, Winifred Hicks, Hannah Harris, Winifred Brook, Maria Fulgoni, Violet Secular, Lawrence Ward, James Mesher, Pasqualina Petraglia, Stanislaw Bielec & Margaret Howlett.

May their souls and the souls of the all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

SICK LIST