



THE ARCHANGEL

St. Michael's School and Parish • Harts Lane • Burghclere • RG20 9JW

No. 19

May 2019

The Shepherd's Providence

Dear parishioners,

The first Sunday of this month is "Good Shepherd Sunday." We immediately think of the psalm: The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. This is actually the Protestant King James translation, but it is beautiful nevertheless, and conveys the biblical idea of God as both Leader and Father, caring for us with a special Providence.

Belief in Divine Providence is fundamental to our faith. Our Christian vocation requires that we live the life of Christ, practising the same selfless love in order to become perfect as Our heavenly Father is perfect. The life of Christ involved much persecution and suffering, as the liturgy recently reminded us. So we too will be tried and tested. Christianity has only one symbol: the Cross. Christ had His, and we have ours. Christ, Cross, and Christianity: these make up the earthly trinity.

In our tempest-tossed lives, trust in God's good Providence is essential, lest we lose heart and sink into despair. As the blacksmith beats the metal, so God will try our faith and trust in His goodness. Thus He makes it firm and strong, right and ready to face perhaps greater trials in order to reap greater glory. "Unless the grain of wheat falling to the ground die, itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." (Jo. 12:24-25) Christianity is not a religion of repose!

However, many of us entertain a false understanding of Providence which, if not corrected, can be fatal to the soul. There are those who believe not in God the Father, but rather in God-the-Grandfather, whose job is to provide His creatures with a comfortable and happy life, void of the sufferings and sorrows caused by sin. They complain at the harshness and injustice of life, forgetting that mankind is a family with corporate responsibilities, sharing in blessings and afflictions alike. These are spiritually immature souls who do not understand that God destines His creatures to a wonders untold and thus needs to prime and prep them in

order that they can appreciate rightly the rewards He won for us at so high a price.

More common are those souls that believe in divine determinism. They envisage Divine Providence as a fixed rule imposed upon them, a divine decree unchangeable, that we must accept as humble creatures to a terrible God. Thus Calvin preached predestination: no matter what we do, our eternity is already decided. Thus Muslims often proclaim In sha Allah in the sense: whatever happens is God's will. And even Catholics can dabble in fatalistic attitudes. Events and consequential fear and sadness can overwhelm weaker souls and their only defense is to offer all up to God with a dejected spirit.

These frames of mind lead to spiritual procrastination and obscurantism. They depict God as a heartless lord, indifferent to the good of His subjects, intent only on their servile obedience. They wait on His Providence, immobile.

Saint Augustine wrote: "Pray as though everything depended on God. Work as though everything depended on you." Saint Thomas developed further the understanding of God's Providence. It is true that He governs all things to the minutest detail, but He also takes into account the fact that He has endowed man with free will. God thus expects man to work out his salvation, counting on man's efforts, ambition, and determination to overcome obstacles and vanquish impediments, while at the same time depending on His grace to bring those efforts to a successful end.

It is therefore wrong to simply wait upon Providence for the things we need. Rather, it is Providence who waits upon our initiative and action in order to reward us with blessings. The harder we work, the more He will bless. It is true that nothing happens without His positive will. But we forget that He often wills that we will in order that His will can take effect. The Shepherd leads His flock. He only carries the lost lamb upon His shoulders. The rest of us have to walk!

Fr. John Brucciani, Prior

Vocation and Family

We may regret that too few young men and women choose to dedicate their lives to the service of Our Lord and His Church. Lack of understanding and generosity is possibly a cause, but there is another reason why vocations are rare. Just as a seed needs good soil to grow, so too a vocation needs a good family to develop and come to fruition.

Family is most certainly the common seedbed of vocations. God is on the lookout not so much for individual souls who can respond to His call as for families who provide the proper raw materials for His grace to flourish and flower.

Vocation is not simply about God calling out to a soul: "Come, follow Me." It is more importantly about the soul responding to that call. God calls readily enough, but too few souls are sufficiently tuned in to the sound of His voice, or on the lookout for his invitation. The apostles Andrew and John had attached themselves to St. John the Baptist. They were on the lookout for the Messiah. John the Baptist pointed to Jesus: "Behold the Lamb of God." Only John and Andrew heard the Baptist. They ran after Our Lord, who turned and asked them: "What seek you? - Lord, where dwellest thou? - Come and see." (Jn. 1:38)

The origins of John and Andrew's vocation came from a prior readiness to respond to Our Lord's wonderful invitation: Come and see. They were on constant alert for the Messiah whose coming they knew was imminent. They did not want to miss Him. Thus, of the many who followed John the Baptist, they alone were able to act on his strange declaration. They looked to Our Lord, and He looked to them in return.

Families should first train their children to the sound of God's voice. It is a voice that is rarely loud and imperative: rather it is a hushed murmur that increases in volume as the years go by, but never becomes clear and compelling. It is a sound that was always there. Time, prayer and counsel reveal its meaning and message.

Divine murmurings cannot be heard, still less understood, if the family home is a constant war zone. A disorderly, disorganized and dysfunctional home, where discipline is wanting, manners are absent, and chaos is the norm, will never be able to offer a child the chance to hear God's call.

But war zones are not the only places where God cannot be heard except for a special grace. Homes in which there are no routines and schedules, that are untidy and dirty, noisy and unruly, where one rarely eats at table as a family, but grazes throughout the day like cattle in a field; homes where children regularly occupy the couch by night (computer games and movies) and

their beds by day; homes where there is constant bickering and heckling, cries of injustice and a careful avoidance of work; such homes foster too little recollection and repose for God's voice to be heard.

The home is the only world a child knows for the first years of his life. It fashions the child's mind, heart and soul. It shapes the child's perception of the world, of neighbor and of God. It decides whether the child is capable of hearing God's voice and following His instructions.

The home must therefore be an organized environment. Just as a monastery is organized around a rule to which all subscribe, so too the home must be a place of order and routine. These create an atmosphere of peace and purpose. The monk is able to listen to God's gentle voice, as he goes about his duties of prayer and labor. So too the child is able to apprehend God's will as he grows up in an environment of obedience, duty, service and prayer.

Homes should be places of routine and regularity, not places where occupants simply "crash." They are places of rest, repose and laughter, but also of service and labor. Life is not a summer camp, neither is a vocation to the religious life. Candidates are required to follow tight schedules. They must possess perseverance and purpose that allows them to follow through with repetitive tasks over long periods. This requires much self-discipline and self-renunciation which are indispensable in order to soldier through the long years of study and training.

A vocation requires much firmness of character if it is to end in success. Too many young souls dare not venture into the path of vocation because they lack the resolve to meet the challenge of monotony and solitude that must inevitably arise when the soul watches his friends make merry and marry. If only they remembered Our Lord's words to Andrew and John "come and see," they would understand that every sacrifice is worth employment in Our Lord's service. He is a generous employer.

Families, therefore, do great service to the Church, when they organize themselves in such a way that the children become used to a life of discipline and routine. The home is not a boarding school, but neither is it a year round holiday venue, all expenses paid. It must be a place of structure and schedule.

In short, family life should leave no place for individualism. A family is a team, and should work, rest and play as a team. If the father is the team captain, Our Lord is the team manager, on the lookout for volunteers for special service. Only properly trained souls can rec-



Why the Cross?

O Crux Ave Spes Unica!

God created Man for happiness. It is a basic instinct for man to seek happiness. For many it involves seeking what they think will make them happy. Unfortunately, after the fall of mankind and the effects of original sin, often their search for happiness can be summarised as an inordinate desire for amusements and pleasures, a love of money and possessions, and a thirst for honours and fame. These are the three major concupiscences mentioned in St. John's Gospel.

This book by Edward Leen explains how these must be worn down and weakened. By his teaching and his example, Our Lord patiently unfolded His plan for happiness for man. This entails rejection of sin in all of its forms, and a whole-hearted acceptance and application of the Gospel. It is clear that men both without and within the faith, affected by original sin, find it difficult to adopt the Gospel teaching fully. Expressions like 'Take up your cross daily and follow me,' have a certain repugnance for those used to seeking pleasure and satisfaction in everything.

Our Lord, by a life of poverty and labour, by word and example, illustrated the philosophy that would lead infallibly to happiness. In obedience to His Father, he followed the path that led eventually to His willingly enduring His own Cross of extreme pain, suffering and ignominious death. Adam had ruined Mankind his by proud disobedience and the tree. Jesus by His humble obedience and death on the Tree of the Cross reversed exactly what Adam had done.

Man is redeemed. His happiness is to be found in the vision of God, face to face hereafter, and in the vision of faith, here and now. The cross has won for Man initiation into the Catholic Faith. In this he must apply the Cross of life to his own crosses in life. He must reject his evil life, fight his own self-centeredness and become more Christ-like in all of his actions. He should see Jesus as the source of all his good and should aspire to ultimate union with Him.

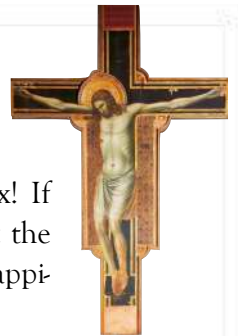
In participating in the divine nature, Man will steadily grow in supernatural virtue. The constant repetition of good acts will cement in him good

habits. Man needs to labour and struggle to reverse his previous obsession for goods and pleasures and adopt a Christ-like love of lowliness and poverty, laying up treasure in heaven and gradually shedding the attractions of the world. In this is the cross. In this is his only hope. In this is true happiness in knowing that he is following the will of God and not his own defective will, whatever it costs to human nature.

Why the Cross? By Edward Leen, C.S.Sp. Sheed

The Book of Life

If you would like to know God, look at the crucifix! If you would like to love God, look at the crucifix! If you would like to serve God, look at the crucifix! If you hope for eternal happiness, look at the crucifix!



If you wonder what you are and your worth, look at the crucifix. If you wonder how much God loves you, look at the crucifix. If you wonder how much He wants you in heaven, look at the crucifix. If you wonder how much He will help you to get there, look at the crucifix.

If you wonder how much you should forgive others, look at the crucifix. If you wonder how much you should do to help others, look at the crucifix. If you wonder how much your faith requires and demands of you, look at the crucifix.

"For we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews indeed a stumbling block and to the Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God." (1 Cor. 1:23)

Humor

After mass, the pastor goes to greet parishioners, in particular young Johnny. "Good morning, Johnny!" As he is shaking Johnny's hand he feels something in the palm of his hand. - "What's this?" the priest asks. - "Money!" says Johnny with a big smile on his face. "It's for you!" - "I don't want to take your money, Johnny" the priest answers. - "I want you to have it, replies Johnny. My daddy says you're the poorest preacher we've ever had and I want to help you."

WEEKLY CONFESSIONS

- Saturday: 11:00
- 1st Friday during Holy Hour
- Sunday before Masses

**CHAPEL CLEANING
VOLUNTEERS NEEDED.
SATURDAYS - 2:30 PM**

BENEDICTION & ROSARY

Sunday 18:00



SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

Saturday, 11th May

**With His Excellency
Bernard Fellay**

*Ceremony begins at noon, followed by Pontifical High
Mass at the faldstool.*

Please arrive in good time.

**Reserved seating for candidates and
their sponsors.**

**All children should be dressed in their
Sunday best and have missals.**

Refreshments served afterwards.

**GENTS EVENING - 25TH MAY - BEER,
BURGERS, THE RACES AND GOOD COMPANY**



JOIN US AT THE

PUB

TICKETS £15

EMAIL: PTA@SANCTUSMICHAEL.COM



**SAVE
the
DATE**

Saturday
6th July
1 pm



	Liturgical Calendar May 2019	SMS
1	St. Joseph the Workman	7:15 / 19:00
2	St. Athanasius, Bishop, Confessor & Doctor	7:15 am
3	Feria 1st Fri. - Holy Hour 18:00	7:15 / 19:00
4	St. Monica 1st Sat.	7:30 / 12:00
5	2nd Sunday after Easter	7:30 Low
		9:00 Low
	17:30 Vespers/Benediction	
6	St. John before the Latin Gate	7:30 / 10:30
	10:30 Mass of BVM / 14:30 Procession	
7	St. Stanislaus, Bishop & Martyr	7:15 am
8	Apparition of St. Michael	7:15 am
9	St. Gregory Nazianzen, Bp. Conf. & Doct.	7:15 am
10	St. Antoninus, Bishop & Confessor	7:15 am
11	Ss Philip & James, Apostles	7:30 / 12:00
	Confirmations at 12:00	
12	3rd Sunday after Easter	7:30 Low
		9:00 Sung
	17:30 Vespers/Benediction	
13	St. Robert Bellarmine, Bp. Conf. & Doct.	7:15 am
14	Feria	7:15 am
15	St. Jean Baptiste de la Salle, Confessor	7:15 am
16	St. Ubaldus, Bishop & Confessor	7:15 am
17	St. Paschal Baylon, Confessor	7:15 am
18	St. Venantius, Martyr	7:30 / 12:00
19	4th Sunday after Easter	7:30 Low
		9:00 Low
	17:30 Vespers/Benediction	
20	St. Bernardine of Siena, Confessor	7:15 am
21	Feria	7:15 am
22	Feria	7:15 am
23	Feria	7:15 am
24	Feria	7:15 am
25	St. Gregory VII, Pope & Confessor	7:30 / 12:00
26	5th Sunday after Easter	7:30 Low
27		9:00 Sung
	17:30 Vespers/Benediction	
27	St. Bede the Venerable, Confessor & Doctor	8:00 am
28	St. Augustine of Canterbury, Bp & Conf.	8:00 am
29	Vigil of the Ascension	8:00 am
30	The Ascension of the Lord	7:30/9:00/19:00 (sung)
31	Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary	8:00 / 19:00



Rosary for St. Michael's School

Thanks to parents' initiative, the holy rosary will be recited between Masses each Sunday for the protection and welfare of St. Michael's School. This extra spiritual help comes at a time when State intervention seeks to erode the fundamental parental right to their children's education.

Evening benediction and rosary will continue as usual.