



# THE ARCHANGEL

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

March 2022

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## Ministers of the Common Good

### Dear Parishioners,

Lent is a time of preparation and penance. It can also be a time for meditation and reflection on the part we wish to play in the edification of God's kingdom on earth.

As baptised subjects of God's kingdom, we share a communal responsibility for its preservation and growth. God's kingdom on earth is the life of Jesus Christ continued in His Mystical Body, into which we have been incorporated through baptism and of which we are members. St Paul tells us: « You are no more strangers and foreigners; but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and the domestics of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone: in whom all the building, being framed together, groweth up into an holy temple in the Lord. In whom you also are built together into an habitation of God in the Spirit. » (Eph.2:19-22)

Christ's Mystical Body is therefore a « holy temple » and the « habitation of God in the Spirit ». It is the duty of all those who are invited to reside therein to contribute to its maintenance, edification and growth. We should not, therefore, envisage sanctification as a merely personal endeavour. Our sanctification is primarily ordained to Christ's glory. We sanctify ourselves when we give due regard to our Lord and order our lives so that we accomplish His will in the best and most efficient manner possible.

Without doubt, our Lord desires to be better known and better loved by all. To this end, He gathered together the twelve apostles and made them His emissaries to the world. They and their ordained successors were chosen to preach the Gospel message and to dispense the means of its application to our daily lives. Ordained ministers of Christ's Mystical Body are not only His ambassadors to the world but also His successors in the work of redemption. They are called to continue Christ's life on earth, which was made up of prayer, preaching and self-offering. In return, they receive the power to generate souls to the supernatural life of grace and thus to contribute concretely to the edification and maintenance of God's kingdom on earth.

The question of succession has haunted every earthly dynasty of kings and emperors. Succession ensures sur-

vival, stability, growth and prosperity. The great political upheavals in world history often revolve around a question of succession. Henry VIII's quest for a male heir is a case in point.

The future of God's earthly kingdom is no different. Although our Lord assures us that His Church will endure until the end of time: « Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world. » (Matt.28:20), we have no guarantee as to the easy availability of its treasures of forgiveness and holiness. This depends on the generosity of souls who wish to give up their lives in order to become ambassadors of and successors to Christ, to continue His mission of salvation to the world.

Without successors, Christ cannot continue His mission of salvation. With few successors, the mission continues, but only for privileged souls who are within reach of His ministers. For the rest, there is only spiritual famine and ruin.

The universal collapse in priestly and religious vocations is a calamity of eternal consequence. Souls that would have been saved in better times no longer have access to the sacraments. Intercessory prayer and in particular Holy Mass are no longer offered. Consequently, the Mystical Body coughs and wheezes, and members become asphyxiated of the vital oxygen of grace which would keep them spiritually alive.

It is harrowing to think of future generations. As the trickle of vocations reduces further to mere drops, our children are confronted with the prospect of sacramental famine amidst moral and perhaps physical persecution. Traditional circles fare no better than the rest of the Church. Tradition's own meagre tally is cause for alarm.

We should reflect, therefore, on our commitment to building up and strengthening the Mystical Body of Christ. Do we live our faith merely to save our souls, or, rather, is the glory of Christ's Mystical Body our primary motive? The former alone does not do justice to our baptismal vocation. Christ would rather we work for Him alone. He will then look after us. It is the quest for the common good of the Church that defines holiness. This is the message we must impart to our children, so that they may entertain the idea of a vocation as the best means of serving God in this life.

Fr John Brucciani, Prior

# Conditions for a Vocation

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Children often wonder how a vocation comes about. They will often ask how a priest, brother or sister first came to know that they were called to the religious life? For superficial souls, such questions are motivated by mere curiosity. For deeper souls, they offer evidence of serious reflection and self-inquiry.

There is no simple answer that explains the confidence with which young persons choose to try their vocation. Some are motivated by personal piety and find the religious life congenial to their tastes, others choose with the desire to serve the common good of the Church, a little like the soldier who decides to serve his country. A treasured friendship with Jesus Christ is never lacking.

Although each vocation has its own personal story to tell, most vocations share a common thread: family! Pope Pius XI writes: « But the first and most natural place where the flowers of the sanctuary should almost spontaneously grow and bloom, remains always the truly and deeply Christian family. Most of the saintly bishops and priests whose "praise the Church declares," owe the beginning of their vocation and their holiness to example and teaching of a father strong in faith and manly virtues, of a pure and devoted mother, and of a family in which the love of God and neighbour, joined with simplicity of life, has reigned supreme. To this ordinary rule of divine Providence exceptions are rare and only serve to prove the rule. » (Encyclical *Ad Catholici Sacerdotii*, 1935)

Catholic families must exhibit certain criteria if they are to offer the right atmosphere in which a vocation can germinate and develop.

## **Parental Piety**

Many priests spontaneously speak of their parent's piety as the primary cause of their own vocation. Parental piety, of the sort that generates vocations, goes beyond the norm. It is one that is built primarily around assiduous devotion to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and to the Rosary. It is a piety that readily embraces the efforts necessary to grow in the knowledge, love and service of our Lord and of the Church. Too often a parent's prayer life does not go beyond prayers with the children, as if the child's spiritual diet was sufficient. It is not. Children must see that their parents are in earnest about the Faith and the good of the Church.

Parents should make known to their children their desire for a vocation in the family. To this end, family prayers should include supplications for priests and seminarians, that they persevere in their vocation, and for young men and women, that they have the courage to give up their lives in the service of the Church and souls.

## **Reverence**

A reverential respect and esteem for men and woman of religion is also a vital ingredient in the genesis of a vocation. Children who are privy to their parents' disapproval of or dissatisfaction with their priests or parish or school become immune to the idea of the priesthood or the religious life. They equate such life choices as reserved for people who are unable to make a living in the world. The transcendent beauty of the priestly or religious life passes them by and they take for granted that others give up their lives so that they can keep theirs.

## **Sacrifice**

Giving up one's life is perceived as a great sacrifice (though marriage too entails much self-surrender). The courage and determination required to pursue a vocation is therefore dependent on a young person's capacity for self-renunciation and adversity. Parents should not make their children's lives too easy and comfortable. There is a reason why children who have been to school and, in particular, boarding school, embrace more readily a vocation. The efforts and constraints of institutionalised living do not frighten them. They are better suited to giving up personal convenience and comfort for the common good. They understand better what it is to commune with others and to find satisfaction and pride in school or community membership rather than in themselves and their own personal endeavours. A child who references himself in regard to his contribution to a school community, however minor the achievement, is a child who is conscious of and happy to contribute to a good beyond himself, *i.e.* a common good.

## **Love of the Common Good**

It is imperative to pass on to children a clear understanding of the common good and one's obligations to it. Too often families will withdraw into themselves in an attempt to ward off the temptations of the world. Children are thus at risk of evaluating their lives and their future in regard to their own specific desires and needs rather than those of their

# Our Earthly Paradise



St. Stephen's Stones - A Series on the  
Archconfraternity of St. Stephen

Fr. J. Steele

What would be the most amazing thing that could possibly happen to anyone living? Is it to visit the moon? Is it to have lots of money, cars, toys, or friends? Perhaps some would argue that it is to have an audience with the Pope or a leader of a country? It is not something that people consider frequently, but the fact is that the most miraculous and wonderful thing that can happen to anyone living on this earth is something that occurs often, even daily in many places. It is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the mysterious representation of Our Lord's great Sacrifice on Calvary. Why, you might ask, is this the case?

The reason is simple: the Mass is a sort of earthly paradise, a beginning of heaven already here on earth. Said another way, in the Mass man is able to enter for a brief space of time and come into contact with the infinite depths of the incredible mystery of the love of the Holy Trinity for souls. God willing, this is what heaven will be for all eternity for every soul - an ever increasing penetration into the life of the Holy Trinity through the Beatific Vision. What a treasure is the Holy Mass and how little we often appreciate it!

But if this is the case in simply attending Holy Mass, how much more beautiful is the work of the Altar Server who gives himself completely to the service of the Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Sacrificial Lamb. In this extraordinary privilege, a mere human being is permitted to come into the closest contact possible with God Himself, to stand in the very doorway to heaven, which the Sanctuary is. Already here on earth the Altar Server adores God as he will for all of

eternity. It is in and through the Holy Mass that the server finds the whole purpose of his life - spending eternity in the praise and adoration of his Creator. Even in the Sacred Scriptures the reader can easily find examples of a heavenly liturgy. St. John the Evangelist describes the heavenly ritual in glowing terms in the book of the Apocalypse. The ancients fall on their face before the throne of God and all the angels and saints of heaven cry out with one voice, "the Lamb that was slain is worthy to receive power and divinity and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and benediction." (Apoc. 5:12) What an exquisite prayer, and how little different from that of the Holy Mass, "Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus!"

For this reason, then, Fr. Hamilton MacDonald, the Founder of our holy Arch-confraternity wrote the prayer that all Members must pray daily, reminding us of the link between this earthly life and our heavenly home: "Grant that, whilst in serving Thee we follow the example of our Patron, St. Stephen, the first Martyr, we may, like him come to see Thy Son standing at the right hand of Thy Majesty." Let this prayer, then, be the cornerstone of our spiritual life as Members of the Arch-confraternity of St. Stephen. Let us strive already in our service at the Altar of Sacrifice to bear in mind that these actions we now perform are nothing more than a beginning of an eternity in the service of God, in other words the doorway into what must be, for us, our earthly paradise.

**St. Stephen, pray for us! St. Pius X, pray for us!**

neighbour. Soldiers sign up out of a sense of patriotism passed on to them through their contact with civil society. Priests and religious are also motivated by a sense of duty and service to the Church passed on to them through contact with Church institutions. Catholic schools allow for prolonged contact with persons who have dared to risk their happiness in religion. Their example is an invitation and encouragement to children to consider if God does not want them also to join the ranks.

Children should be used to participating in church and parish initiatives. Altar serving is a privileged means of removing the fear of a life dedicated to the sanctuary. Care of the church precincts brings to life the words of psalm 83: « How lovely are thy taberna-

cles, O Lord of hosts! ... Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, O Lord: they shall praise thee for ever and ever. »

Much can be written on the best means of fostering vocations. Not enough can be said, however, on the importance of making our Lord a living entity within the bosom of the child's school and family. He is not an ideal to follow, or a distant deity, but a living, breathing Person who is as present and close to us as we are to each other. In fine, it is friendship with Christ that pushes a soul to think of a vocation. Lovers want to spend their lives with each other, and we must love our Lord, really and truly love Him, if we are to consider spending our lives with Him in consecrated service, forever. ♡

## Our Greatest Treasure!

### A Traditional Catholic School

Catholics should not choose mixed schools but have their own schools especially for children. They should choose excellent and reputable teachers for them. For an education in which religion is altered or non-existent is a very dangerous education.



ST. MICHAEL'S  
SCHOOL

All teaching should occur in an atmosphere of Christian piety. If it is otherwise, if this sacred inspiration does not penetrate the spirits of the teachers and of the students, the instruction will produce only little fruit and will often even have seriously harmful consequences.

*Encyclical Militantis Ecclesiae, Pope Leo XIII*

### Admissions open

[secretary@sanctusmichael.com](mailto:secretary@sanctusmichael.com)



ST MICHAEL'S SCHOOL WARMLY INVITES  
ALUMNI, FAMILY & FRIENDS TO CELEBRATE OUR

# 30th Anniversary!

PLEASE JOIN US FOR A SPECIAL REUNION  
BUFFET LUNCH & DRINKS

**Saturday 7 May 2022**

Arrival 12pm | Lunch served 12.30pm

Chesil House, 4 Chesil Street, Winchester SO23 0HU

Tickets £45 | Contact: [alumniandfriends@sanctusmichael.com](mailto:alumniandfriends@sanctusmichael.com)

BOOK ONLINE HERE > 

## 30th Anniversary Celebration



19th March 2022

### Family CEILIDH

ECCHINSWELL  
VILLAGE HALL,  
5 - SPM

TICKETS available  
via noticeboard



## Liturgical Calendar March 2022

1	Feria	7:15
2	<b>Ash Wednesday</b>	7:15 / 19:00
3	Feria	7:15
4	Feria <b>1st Fri - Holy Hour 18:00</b>	7:15 / 19:00
5	Feria - <b>1st Sat.</b>	7:30 / 12:00
6	<b>First Sunday of Lent</b>	7:30, 9:00
	<i>2nd Collection for District seminarians</i>	18:00 Benediction
7	Feria in Lent	7:15
8	St. Thomas Aquinas, Conf. & Doct.	7:15
9	Ember Wednesday	7:15
10	Feria in Lent	7:15
11	Ember Friday	7:15
12	Ember Saturday	7:30 / 12:00
13	<b>Second Sunday of Lent</b>	7:30, 9:00
		18:00 Benediction
14	Feria in Lent	7:15
15	Feria in Lent	7:15
16	Feria in Lent	7:15
17	Feria in Lent	7:15
18	Feria in Lent	7:15 / 19:00
19	<b>St. Joseph, Spouse of the BVM</b>	7:30 / 12:00 (sung)
20	<b>Third Sunday of Lent</b>	7:30, 9:00
		18:00 Benediction
21	Feria in Lent	7:15
22	Feria in Lent	7:15
23	Feria in Lent	7:15
24	Feria in Lent	7:15
25	<b>Annunciation of the BVM</b>	7:15 / 19:00 (sung)
26	Feria of Lent	7:30 / 12:00
27	<b>Fourth Sunday of Lent (Lætäre)</b>	7:30, 9:00
		18:00 Benediction
28	Feria in Lent	7:15
29	Feria in Lent	7:15
30	Feria in Lent	7:15
31	Feria in Lent	7:15

Stole fees (also called stipends) are offerings in consideration of expenses incurred by a chapel or priest in the course of ministering to the faithful. The stole fee is paid to the priory of the priest's residence.

Mass: £14

Gregorian of Masses: £600

Baptisms: £50

Weddings £150

Funerals £100