

Week beginning 16th March (Monday)

Show me my

purpose....

“The two most important days in your life are the day you are born and the day you find out why.”

Mark Twain

As we continue our Lenten journey we continue to look at the impact that other people have on their surroundings, whether that's people, their community, their environment or the Church.

The woman went back to the town and said to the people, 'Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?'

John 4:28-29

The Samaritan woman's exchange with Jesus continues. In the end, she puts aside her water jar and returns to the town to tell everyone about the man she has met and the conversation he had with her.

Conversations can change lives.

Take a minute to think about the following questions and share your thoughts with the person next to you;

Are there times when I find it impossible to find the right thing to say?

Is there someone who I have not spoken to in a while that I should contact?

God of miracles, grant us courage to take the first step and strike up a conversation, for with you nothing is impossible. Help us to listen and to share with others, so that together we can all build a better future.

Amen.

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Today is Saint Patrick's Day, St Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland and he really did exist. He was born to wealthy parents near the end of the fourth century and was taken from Britain to Ireland as a slave at the age of 16. He escaped after 6 years and became a Christian priest, and later a Bishop. He returned to Ireland as a missionary and played a major part in converting the Irish to Christianity. Some of his writings survive.

St Patrick is traditionally associated with the Shamrock plant, which he used to explain the concept of the Trinity. St Patrick's value doesn't really come from the historical details but from the inspiration of a man who returned to the country where he had been a child slave, in order to bring the message of Christ.



**Let us thank God today that St Patrick, despite his imprisonment,
realised his purpose in life. Let us pray;**

**God our Father,
you sent Saint Patrick to preach your glory to the people of Ireland.
By the help of his prayers,
may all Christians proclaim your love to all men.
Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.**

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Do not forget the things your eyes have seen, nor let them slip from your heart all the days of your life; rather, tell them to your children and your children's children.

Deuteronomy 4:9

In Lima knowledge has been passed down from generation to generation. When to plant seeds, when the rains will come, when fish will be abundant in the river. But much of this knowledge has been lost, as new technology takes over and as more and more of us are removed from where our food is produced.

Even for those who remain on the land, the old knowledge is beginning to fail. The weather is changing and the seasons are no longer predictable.

One exciting project being pioneered by experts in Peru supports children to care for the environment and tackle climate change. They have set up eco-brigades in four different schools in Peru's capital, Lima - a desert city where it rarely rains.

The children meet weekly to find out about topics like climate change and biodiversity, and to learn ways to protect the Lomas mountains, known as Lima's "green lung". Fog from the Pacific coast nurtures vegetation and natural life in this crucial eco-system, which is at risk from land trafficking, mining pollution and climate change.

The eco-brigades have started work on a forestation project to help protect the land.

Ever-living God, you remain constant even when all about us changes. Help us to hold true to your word, to return to the roots of what is good, to stand firm in the face of challenges, and to do what we can to encourage hope for the future in this generation and for generations to come.

Amen.

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Everything we know about the husband of Mary and the foster father of Jesus comes from Scripture.

We know he was a carpenter, a working man. He wasn't rich for when he took Jesus to the Temple to be circumcised and Mary to be purified he offered the sacrifice of two turtledoves or a pair of pigeons, allowed only for those who could not afford a lamb. Despite his humble work and means, Joseph came from a royal lineage. Gospel writers Luke and Matthew disagree some about the details of Joseph's genealogy but they both mark his descent from David, the greatest king of Israel. Indeed the angel who first tells Joseph about Jesus greets him as "son of David," a royal title used also for Jesus.



We know Joseph was a compassionate, caring man. When he discovered Mary was pregnant after they had been betrothed, he knew the child was not his but was as yet unaware that she was carrying the Son of God. He knew women accused of adultery could be stoned to death, so he resolved to send her away quietly to not expose her to shame or cruelty. However, when an angel came to Joseph in a dream and told him, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins," he did as the angel told him and took Mary as his wife. Joseph was fulfilling Gods will.... He was fulfilling his purpose.

O Blessed Saint Joseph, faithful guardian to whom God entrusted Jesus and Mary, we plead with you by the love which you did bear them, to keep us from harm of soul and body, that we may always serve them in holiness and purity of love. Amen.

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***I freed your shoulder from the burden; your hands were freed from the load.
You called in distress and I saved you.***

Psalm 80:6-7

Today is international Day for Happiness! The psalmist recalls that God heard his people's cries and rescued them from distress when he freed them from oppression in Egypt. On the banks of the Red Sea, the prophet Miriam led the Israelites in dancing and singing in happiness at their freedom.

What makes you happy?

Do we take our happiness for granted?

On World Water Day last year, a new block of toilets was officially opened at Kwaedza Primary School in Zimbabwe. This was a cause for so much happiness that the event was attended by the Vicar General, Father Damien Gumbo, as well as 700 local people and pupils. These were the first flushable toilets at any school in the district.

**God my refuge, you save me when I call in distress. Lift the burdens of your people and work through us, so that all people may live a dignified life.
Amen.**