

Always, “Life is Worth Living”... (By Rev. Martin Onuoha) Continued from last weekend... Published in the Universe Catholic Weekly 19th Nov, 26th Nov & 3rd Dec.

‘St. John Paul defines another problem: “The choice of euthanasia becomes more serious when it takes the form of a murder committed by others on a person who has in no way requested it and who has never consented to it. The height of arbitrariness and injustice is reached when certain people, such as physicians or legislators, arrogate to themselves the power to decide who ought to live and who ought to die” And yet, apparently plausible arguments are made for it most of which presuppose that life is only worthwhile at a certain level which others can judge. This is often presented as compassion, but it is nothing of the kind. Intrinsic to such positions is the presumption that it is the mind or soul which is primary, and that bodily life is simply a means to an end, it has no value in itself, but the Church has always taught that we are a composite of body and soul. There is always an undertow of Cartesian Dualism in those who propose euthanasia just as there is in those who think that sexual differential is a matter of mental choice. Pope Francis has called the propagation of such ideas to school children ‘ideological colonisation’. Neither does humanness lie in the mere sequence of an individual’s biographical life, since the givenness of our particular kind of being precedes and prescribes the kinds of actions of which we are capable.

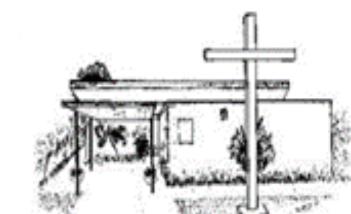
The notion of life being assessed according to its presumed ‘quality’ (which, after all, is only the inversion of the phrase ‘unworthy of life’ and makes the same assumptions) has become a very common assumption because it is easy to understand, and it appeases our natural human desire for happiness and health which are often now treated as the only possible values. St. John Paul points out that it makes man or a committee a judge over others as to who should or should not live. The criteria for such judgment cannot but be arbitrary although they will be dressed up in various rationalised jargons. Many spouses who visit their other halves who have dementia or Alzheimer’s in hospitals and care homes on daily basis do so not out of sheer duty or as a burden but in love, and cherish every moment with them, and so would not acquiesce to the quality-of-life argument. This argument intrinsically represents a dangerously simple application of Darwin’s theory of the survival of the fittest, which if widely applied could justify the elimination of the elderly or the wiping out of even some races that may be considered non-viable. In any event, the old phrase ‘slippery slope’ is exactly the right one. Wherever euthanasia has been introduced (Holland, Belgium, some US states) it has always expanded beyond the original restrictions so that eventually the issue of free choice (apparently sacrosanct in the modern world!) becomes blurred. The commonest reason given for elderly people requesting euthanasia where the law has been established is not wanting to be a burden to relatives and carers.

The basic command to love one’s neighbour as oneself (a Christian ethic which is widely understood as the Golden Rule outside it) cannot be transformed into a judgement that a neighbour should die. This is virtually self-evident. Hence, against the golden rule or mercy argument, Euthanasia must be called a *false mercy*, and indeed a disturbing "perversion" of mercy. True "compassion" leads to sharing another's pain and helping them to bear or alleviate it; it does not kill the person whose suffering we cannot ourselves bear. The physician has an obligation to halt the natural course of the fatal illness only if he has a charge to help in some way and as long as he has this charge. Manifestly, active euthanasia would do no small damage to the all-important doctor-patient relationship. Doctors and hospitals are bound to radically change character if euthanasia is introduced, and trust is eroded.

It is fundamental here to distinguish between active killing and passive renunciation or “pulling the plug” of life-prolonging measures. In the first case the active cause of the patient’s death is the intervention of the physician and not the sickness of the patient. This involves the inescapable culpability of the physician. In the second case the active cause of death is the illness. There is only the removal of medically and morally unwarranted artificial support that prolongs the dying process, allowing death to occur naturally. The distinction is quite clear, and it is a moral one. Discontinuing medical procedures that are burdensome, dangerous, extraordinary, or disproportionate to the expected outcome can be legitimate; it is the refusal of ‘over-zealous’ treatment. This is justified because here one does not will to cause death; one’s inability to impede it is merely accepted. (CCC. 2278) Hence St. John Paul says, one can in conscience “refuse forms of treatment that would only secure a precarious and burdensome prolongation of life, so long as the normal care due to the sick person in similar cases is not interrupted”. (EV. 25) There are then absolutely clear guidelines.’ *To be continued*

Newsletter for the Parishes of Our Lady and the Apostles, St. Ambrose and St. Vincent de Paul

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 Parish Priest: Fr. Martin Onuoha Email: frifeanyimom@yahoo.com
 Deacon: Rev. Moses Ibeh
12th December 2021 THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT
 You can join us via this Live Stream link: <https://www.churchservices.tv/ourladystockport> (for Our Lady’s church)
 OR click on tinyurl.com/stockportparishes or [Stockport Parishes - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...) (for both St. Vincent’s and St. Ambrose’)



IN LINE WITH GOVERNMENT GUIDELINES, WE ASK THAT YOU PLEASE USE THE HAND SANITISER, SIGN IN AT THE DOOR FOR TRACK AND TRACE USING THE QR CODE OR PAPER, WEAR A FACE COVERING, AND GIVE PEOPLE SOME SPACE UNTIL THE PANDEMIC IS OVER.

Date	Feast	Time	Church	Mass Intention
Sun 12th Dec	THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT.	5.30pm 7.00pm 9.30am 11.00am	Vigil Mass Sat. St Ambrose Vigil Mass Sat. Our Lady’s St Vincent’s Our Lady’s	Our Parish Family Our Parish Family Pat Melson RIP Allan Jenkinson- ANN
Mon 13th Dec	St Lucy, V,M	9.30am	St. Ambrose	Francis Moore RIP
Tues 14th Dec	St John Of The Cross, P, D	9.30am	Our Lady’s	Collins Family RIP
Wed 15th Dec	Ferial	9.30am	St. Vincent’s	Peter Jeffers RIP
Thurs 16th Dec	Ferial	9.30am 11am 7.00pm	St Ambrose St Vincent’s (Funeral Mass) Our Lady’s-	Collins Family Sylvia Pat Melson Penitential Service
Fri 17th Dec	Ferial	9.30am	St. Vincent’s	Private Intention
Sat 18th Dec	Ferial	9.30am	Our Lady’s	Matthew Joseph Crowley (Thanksgiving Mass)
Sun 19th Dec	FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT (DAY OF SPECIAL PRAYER FOR EXPECTANT MOTHERS)	5.30pm 7.00pm 9.30am 11.00am	Vigil Mass Sat. St Ambrose Vigil Mass Sat. Our Lady’s St Vincent’s Our Lady’s	Our Parish Family Christine Mary White– B/d mem Mike Smith RIP Peter Felstead RIP

Penitential Services for the Parishes of St Joseph, St Ambrose, St Vincent and Our Lady and the Apostles: will be on Thursday 16th December, 7pm, at Our Lady’s Church. We are grateful to Fr Geoff, Fr Jim, Fr Blaise and Fr Martin, for making themselves available to for the service and for confessions.

There is **Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament** every weekday morning before Mass from 8:30am to 9:30am.
 The **Sacrament of Reconciliation** is available after 9.30am Mass on Saturday morning and by appointment.

Please pray for those preparing to receive the sacraments:

Baptisms: New Baptism classes will commence in **January 2022**

First Holy Communion: You may begin now to enroll for next year’s classes for those not in Catholic schools. Please send names to the parish office. Would you consider volunteering as a Catechist?

Confirmation: Please pray for the **48 young people** who will be confirmed here by Bishop Mark on 9th December. We thank the Catechists for their amazing work and sacrifices!

RCIA: Are you or anyone you know **interested in joining the Catholic Church**, or just wish to learn more about the faith? Please send us an email or call the Parish Office to give your details. God Bless!

In St. Vincent's: We remember in our prayers all the intentions on the St. Vincent's Prayer Board. Please add your intentions to the Prayer Board in church and you can see who is in need of our prayers on our website under "Thoughts for the week".

In Our Lady's: Maureen Brosnahan, Kelly Brosnahan, Zach Tierney, Irene Cox, Lee Abernathy, Janice Cook, Eileen Melia, Annie Topping, Theresa Burrows, Josephine O'Hagan, Denise Corlet, Nora Reade, Tommy Higgins, Marie Kenefick, Eileen Mains, Beryl Collins, Josie Vaughan, Michael Heath, Honora Hague, Victoria Russell, Sophie Mansfield, Mary Brett, Vivienne Goostry, John Wynne, Vincent Tracey, Ronald Fury, Veronica Gallagher, Aine O'Callaghan, Mary Murphy, Kathleen Bond, Jordan Harris, Alana Walsh, Jean Egginton, Mary Glindon and Sean O'Callaghan.

In St. Ambrose's: Mavis Doggett, Terry Skorzewski, Khia Whitehead, Eleanor Loftus, Mary Andrusiak, Carl Stanley, C. Wootton, Mary Sein, Paul Thuoc, Barry Lloyd, Andrew Way, Mary Young, Irene Walker, Veronica Norbury, John Holt, Imelda Judge, Veronica Lane, Joanna Winter, Pat Judge, Paul McClure, Helen Jenkins, Marie Hughes.

Recently Departed: May the soul Pat Melson, Patricia Kenny and the souls of all our recently departed rest in peace.

Anniversaries

Mary Hawcroft, Lynda Anderson, Timothy Robert Ascough, Steven James Neil, Mary Jewsbury, Maurice Higgins, Eliza Bohan, Winifred Mary Ryan, Madeleine O'Connell, Vincent Gough, John Durkin, Joseph Thorley, Joan Kelly, Bill Matthews, Paula Kiely, Allan Jenkinson, John Shields, Ethel Maguire, Katie Collier, David Williams, Mary Ann Carroll, William Hope, Carole Ann Armes, Brenda Brett, Hilda Satherwaite, Andrew Callaghan, Arthur Bailey, Teresa Greenwood, Brenda Collier, Leslie Whelan, Raymond (Ray) McNutty, Clive Parsons, Dominic Fitzmaurice, Joan Matthews, Mary Fox, Patrick Curran, Bill Welch, Hugh Coyle, Ian Waldron, Joan Kemball, Donal Crowley, Andrew Jansen Moore, Margaret Marshall, Francis Moore, Francis Maguire, Bill Cunningham, Joshua James Pearson, Aidan John Egginton, Anne-Marie Borrell, Ashley Jordan Potter, Patrick Joseph Kenny, Kevin McGahan, Matthew Joseph Crowley, Caleb Hodgkinson, Josephine Margaret Farrell, Irene McLoughlin, Bernadette Teresa McNally.

General Notices:

Year of St. Joseph: "Jesus granted to him [St Joseph] the special privilege of safeguarding the dying against the snares of Lucifer, just as he had also saved Him [Jesus] from the schemes of Herod". St Alphonsus Liguori.

NEW COVID MEASURES FOR OUR CHURCHES EFFECTIVE FROM MIDNIGHT— The bishop alerts us to announcement made by the Government on Thursday that came into effect at the midnight making **face coverings a legal requirement in all churches and places of worship.** We already ask people by way of advice and recommendation to wear face coverings when in church. It will now be important to highlight that **this is required by law unless a person is exempt or has a reasonable excuse.** See the updated guidance provided by the Government:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own>

Below is a note from bishop Mark:

‘Following my message to alert you to the change overnight requiring the mandatory wearing of face covering in places of worship I am grateful for the specific advice now received for our churches from the Bishops Conference of England and Wales. We are once again grateful to Canon Christopher Thomas and the General Secretariat for their prompt response. I would ask you to note:

1. A significant clarification that “It is strongly recommended that congregational signing within church buildings continues with applied face coverings.”
2. NHS Covid passes will not apply to churches or acts of worship, social gatherings linked to churches will need to comply with the new requirements but only when 500 people or more are involved.
3. We continue with good practice outlined in *Practical Guidance for Churches*
4. A response to questions arising from the Bishop's statement *Honouring Sunday* on the Sunday Mass Obligation. I hope this guidance and information will be helpful as we prepare for Christmas amid present concerns and uncertainties. With every good wish, Yours sincerely in Christ, + Mark’
For full text from Canon Thomas, please see file:///C:/Users/Acer/Downloads/2021.12.09%20-%20Guidance%20for%20Churches%20December%202021%20-%20FINAL.pdf


Carol Services Locally—St Gabriel's on the corner of Clover Avenue and Garner's Lane for Community Carols today 12th December at 3pm followed by mince pies and warm drinks. **Churches Together** Saturday 18th December from 10am Davenport Green nr Davenport Station. **St George's**, a service of Nine Lessons and Carols on Sunday 19th December at 6.30pm followed mince pies and drinks .

Gift Mass Sunday 12th December - Caritas would appreciate any gifts for children this Christmas. Please wrap your gifts and label with the gender and age range appropriate for that gift. Caritas are also happy to receive online donations (see poster in the porch).

Last weekend's collections (excludes standing orders) : **OLATA- £927.84 St Ambrose- £190.33 St Vincent's- £101.30**
THANK YOU!

Offertory envelopes can be obtained from the Parish Office or see links for online giving to the Parishes: Please check our websites

Proposed times for Christmas Masses:-

Fri 24 th Dec	Christmas Eve <i>Vigil Masses for Christmas</i>	4.30pm 4.45pm 5.45pm (6pm Mass Midnight	St. Vincent's Children's Mass St. Ambrose's Children's mass Our Lady's Children's Mass Our Lady's	
Sat 25 th Dec	The Nativity of the Lord	9.15am 9.30am 10.45am	St. Vincent's St. Ambrose's Our Lady's	
Sun 26 th Dec	Holy Family Sunday	9.00am 10.00am 10.45am	St Vincent's St Ambrose's Our Lady's	

Fr Martin's Annual Holiday: As usual, Fr Martin plans to be away on holiday for one month. All our Masses will be covered.

Free Medical Outreach Umunomo 2022—established by Fr Martin, on his mother's 1st anniversary, is in it's 3rd year. Umunomo Village is in the Eastern region of Nigeria and is Fr Martin's home village. Every year, during his annual holiday, Fr Martin provides a series of free clinics and outreach services for the region, including GP's, Prescriptions, Health checks, remedies for minor illnesses and eye operations. This is a fantastic opportunity to help people who otherwise would not get medical care as the main medical services are too far away from this village and unaffordable. About 20 doctors and 30 nurses are sourced to provide care for 1000 patients during this yearly outreach programme. January 2022 is the next planned Outreach. If you would like to support Fr Martin this year, please donate through the link below or instead of cards/presents this Christmas, please consider giving him a donation which will make a difference to real persons with health challenges and needs in his region. Here Onuoha.org is a link to the video trailer of the first outreach and <http://tinyurl.com/supportfathermartin> is the link to support.

Parish Volunteers Get-together on 14th December is now cancelled due to the current Covid situation.

The Universe Catholic Weekly is thrilled to announce that we have launched our new on line newspaper with the full support of our first subscriber none other than His Eminence Cardinal Vincent Nichols. Order **your Digital** copy by going to www.universecatholicweekly.co.uk or call us on 0743661 7650 and ask for Michelle. Special offer: Only £20 for 3 months.

Our Lady's News

Visit of the House Bound: ‘It was lovely to visit our amazing parishioners at home on Tuesday bringing them our love and prayers **this Christmas.**’ **Fr Martin**

Christmas Flower Collection: There will be a retiring collection next weekend to contribute towards the cost of **the decorating our beautiful church with flowers.**

The Piety Stall—is now open and has confirmation and communion cards and gifts, Christmas cards - single and boxes - advent calendars and a selection of rosary beads.

Children's Liturgy: Hand sanitisers will be available and surfaces will be wiped down. The leaders will be wearing face masks as per the diocese guidance and we respectfully ask any parents/ guardians to wear a face mask if attending with children. Please can we ask that children do not attend if they have been in contact with anyone who is covid positive, have a temperature, cough or cold symptoms to avoid spreading viruses to others.

St Ambrose News

Visit of the House Bound: Fr Martin hopes to visit this week. The office will call them to arrange.

Flowers for the Altar at Christmas—Please consider giving donations for the Christmas altar flowers.

Christmas Raffle -The raffle will be held next Saturday, 18th December after Mass. Donations towards Christmas flowers are also very welcome.

St Vincent's News

Visit of the House Bound: ‘It was lovely to visit our amazing parishioners at home on Wednesday, bringing them our love and prayers **this Christmas.**’ **Fr Martin**

Today Sunday 12th - Gift Mass - take up your gifts at the offertory. Help still needed to take the gifts to Wythenshawe.

4. pm—Service of Light - a quiet contemplative service

Advent Prayer Group as usual on Monday morning and Rosary at 7pm Tuesday 14th Dec.

Pat Melson's funeral Mass at 11am Thursday 16th

Christmas Church Cleaning - after Mass on Friday 17th - all welcome!

Open air Crib Display under the church porch canopy on Tuesday 21st Dec from 3pm to 4pm approx - bring your children after school to light a candle and leave a prayer message.

Please send any items for inclusion in the newsletter to the Parish Office by 12 midday on Thursday. Kindly indicate parish of choice for you mass intentions. Bear in mind that dates might not be available.

Our Lady and the Apostles, Shaw Heath, Stockport SK3 8BQ St. Ambrose, Adswood Road, Stockport, SK3 3QA, St. Vincent de Paul, 29 Handley Road, Bramhall, Stockport, SK7 3E

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