

Always, "Life is Worth Living"... (By Rev. Martin Onuoha) Continued from last weekend...

.... It appears quite plausible to suggest that "the most important aspect of having a right to life is that one can choose whether or not to invoke it." For the proponents of euthanasia, "death control like birth control is a matter of human dignity. Without it persons become puppets". Such arguments lead to the view that any sick person (though invariably the list widens beyond the sick) having requested for aid to die, has a right to or ought to be aided. St. John Paul's position here is clear. He agrees with St. Thomas' condemnation of the taking of one's life or that of the other, and with Saint Augustine's teaching that "it is never licit to kill another: even if he should wish it, indeed if he request it because, hanging between life and death, he begs for help in freeing the soul struggling against the bonds of the body and longing to be released; nor is it licit even when a sick person is no longer able to live". (ST. 11, 11, q 64, a 5; *Evangelium Vitae*, No. 66) We are not the absolute masters and final judges of the Life into which we are born and which we have not created.

Clearly the basic principle that human life is sacred in itself, rather than in relation to some presumed 'quality of life', disallows the argument that suicide and euthanasia can be justified when one's bodily life is seen as useless or an encumbrance. Suffering, here, intrinsic to all human lives (a fact of experience and the burden of the expulsion from Eden story) is not something that can be used to deny the gift quality of human life or as sufficient reason for refusing the gift whenever we want to. Life is a given in which we find and found ourselves not something that we have ourselves selected on our own chosen terms. It is all too easy to let the shallow ethics of consumerism infiltrate our attitudes here.

Human life is distinctively unique. Hence, while animals in pain are 'put to sleep'(killed), historically this has not been the case with human beings. If the analogy holds and there is nothing special to human life, then all those with incurable diseases both mental and physical could in principle at the behest of state legislation be killed. On what grounds could it be resisted unless there is something inherently wrong in it? Certainly, most people would be horrified by such homicide, but this is precisely the implicit distinction which is now used to justify 'assisted dying'. Once accepted it is impossible in thought (and therefore probably eventually in action) to prevent a whole series of frightening consequences. If, for instance, your favourite dog was mauling a child, you might well not allow anyone to shoot the dog because it is of equal value to the child, and you love the dog more deeply. If the argument was that one should think of the suffering caused to the parents of the child, the reply could be that your feelings about the death of a favourite dog are just as important. To most people this suggestion and even my use of it as an argument feels ludicrous. And so, it is. But what arguments would there be to counter it in a world of relativism, consumerism, the elevation of individual choice, and the denial of any specifically sacred character to human life as such? Laws made with apparently good intentions and associated with positive values such as choice and compassion can have appalling consequences and make what once would have been considered intolerable seem normal. There was no outcry in Germany when *Dasein ohne Leben – Psychiatrie und Menschlichkeit* was shown.

As St. John Paul pointed out, the demand for euthanasia is often a hidden plea for more help arising from what we could call 'social death'. The response should be to provide that caring concern of the medical staff, and of the patient's family, which obviates the feelings of abandonment and worthlessness which so often lead to the desire for death.

Note needs to be taken of the very thin border line between voluntary, involuntary and non-voluntary euthanasia. The decision will almost inevitably be taken either at a time of great distress or so far in advance (through an advance directive or living will) that the decision is hypothetical; the patient may be suffering from clinical depression; the influence of relatives and doctor may be weighty, though subtle. In a very moving case, the effects of which I myself witnessed, the sister of a patient was left in unending agony and fits after witnessing life snuffed from her sister at the authorisation of a niece who was the patient's next of kin due to proximity. The patient's face had lit up on seeing her sister (whom she had missed for years) and she clearly wanted time with her, but the next of kin had already signed for life's termination and wanted this quick enough to allow her to catch a flight to join her boyfriend for their pre-booked holiday. No plea from the sister could alter the process, as she had no legal standing in the matter. As her parish priest, I was left the onus of assuaging this lady's pains on her return home. It became clear to me how people change their minds or act in certain ways when under great pressure which would change if the pressure were removed.

But this pressure could take many forms. For instance, consider that Mr A has made a reasonable or justified request for euthanasia, what is the standing of Mr B, whose circumstances are the same, yet who has not made such a request? Surely Mr B is then unreasonable and unjustified in deciding to continue using costly resources and placing considerable strains on relatives and on the medical and nursing staff and, in some cases, on the taxpayer. What seems unlikely now can become an accepted commonplace. Euthanasia, though often justified (as abortion has been) through difficult cases which involve suffering from which we naturally recoil, is primarily a simplified rationalism which can only find value in the exercise of health, intelligence, the pleasurable, and social comforts. It depends upon exactly the same crude rationalised eugenics adopted in Germany in the darkest period of its history. Euthanasia presents itself as bright (as eugenics did then) but is always in league with darkness. *To be continued.....*

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

Telephone: 0161 480 2489 Email: stockport3parishes@gmail.com
Websites: ourladyandtheapostles.co.uk/ stambrosechurch.org.uk/ stvincentbram-hall.org/

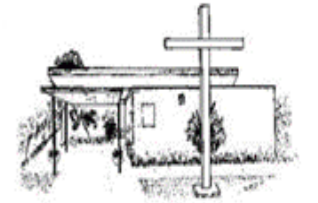
Parish Priest: Fr. Martin Onuoha Email: frifeanyimom@yahoo.com

Deacon: Rev. Moses Ibeh

5th December 2021 THE SECOND 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 SIGN IN AT THE DOOR FOR TRACK AND TRACE USING THE QR CODE OR PAPER, THOUGH NOT REQUIRED BY LAW, WE STILL PLEAD THAT YOU WEAR A FACE COVERING, AND GIVE PEOPLE SOME SPACE UNTIL THE PANDEMIC IS OVER.

Date	Feast	Time	Church	Mass Intention
Sun 5th Dec	The Second Sunday of Advent	5.30pm 7.00pm 9.30am 11.00am 1.00pm	Vigil Mass Sat. St Ambrose Vigil Mass Sat. Our Lady's St Vincent's Our Lady's Baptism—OLATA	Our Parish Family Paula & Agnes Kiely –RIP Our Parish Family Andrew Callaghan—ANN Bobbie & Aria Lonsdale
Mon 6th Dec	Ferial (St Nicholas, B.)	9.30am	St. Ambrose	Holy Souls
Tues 7th Dec	St Ambrose, B, D. Memorial	9.30am	Our Lady's	Liam Gibbons RIP
Wed 8th Dec	Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary	9.30am	St. Vincent's	Celestina Onuoha RIP
Thurs 9th Dec	Ferial (St Johan Diego Cuahtlatotzin)	9.30am 7.00pm	St Ambrose Our Lady's— Confirmation Mass by Bishop Mark	Confirmation Candidates James Terence & Mary Dunn
Fri 10th Dec	Ferial (Our Lady of Loreto)	9.30am	St. Vincent's	Michael Smith RIP
Sat 11th Dec	Ferial (St Damascus I, Pp)	9.30am	Our Lady's	Dominic Fitzmaurice & Kathleen Mullinsan— Anniversary and Patricia Iredale—RIP
Sun 12th Dec	The 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 Our Parish Family Allan Jenkinson- ANN

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: 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 Eginton, 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 and the souls of all our recently departed rest in peace.

Anniversaries

Maureen Sylvia Lohbach, Carl Aaron Forshaw, Angela Pugh Gerald Pinnington, Vincent Gerald Adamson, Thomas Joseph Connell, Lucy Ann Core, Christopher Doherty, Aleksander Hertsko, Annie McKee, Goerigina Webb, Joe Selby, Frank Maguire, Samuel Fidler, Eileen Fleming.

General Notices:

Year of St. Joseph: 'Like St Joseph, let us live each day according to the dispositions of Providence, doing whatever God suggests.' St Joseph Marello

Covid-19 Update from the Bishops' Conference: 'With respect to the current situation with the omicron variant it is important to ensure the following points are followed in our churches: • That people displaying any symptoms of covid-19 should stay at home and not travel to church or participate in person. • That hand sanitiser is available to those attending the Church. • That there is a strong recommendation for people to wear a face covering (both nose and mouth) during the act of worship. • That there is good ventilation and air throughput in the building; in this case, because of climatic conditions, it would be important to remind people to wrap up well in church! • That a positive message encouraging people to get vaccinated and have the booster jab when able is delivered whenever possible. • That people who are engaged in a form of pastoral ministry which involves ministry to the housebound, sick and vulnerable, should take regular lateral flow tests to ensure they are safe to do so. These are free from the NHS. There is now very strong evidence to support that the main mode of transmission is through breath and nasal aerosols, and that the risk from surface and touch transmission is very small indeed. As such, the strict regimes of church cleaning that were recommended at the beginning of the opening of churches for public worship are no longer necessary. General church cleaning is sufficient. If these guidance points are supported, then the churches will continue to be safe places for people to gather for acts of public worship, including over the Christmas period. I am in an ongoing discussion with Jim McManus and PHE regarding the developing situation and will update bishops as soon as the situation changes.' - Canon Christopher Thomas

Confirmation Group: Important Dates - All to be held at Our Lady and The Apostles. Confirmation Rehearsal -**8th December—7pm.** Confirmation Mass—Thursday **9th December—7pm.**

Baptism course dates have changed- The course will now run as follows: Saturday 22nd & 29th January; 5th February.

Winter Mouthpiece 21/22—The Justice and Peace Winter Newsletter is available on line at www.jp-shrewsburydiocese.org.uk Joanne Hornby is giving a talk on Catholic Chaplaincy Tuesday 30th November 7.30 to 8.15 pm Doors open at 7.15 To register for the meeting please email SKeithTayl2@outlook.com

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)

Two Carol services— St Gabriel's on Sunday 12th December at 3pm followed by drinks and mince pies **AND** Churches Together Saturday 18th December around the tree on the green next to Davenport station from 10am to 11am "Coffee to the Core" is going to have his hot drinks wagon just alongside us so we should be able to be a bit warmer this year. He does take cards!!!

H3 supporting homeless into housing, Stockport Charity. H3 help and support local homeless people get into housing in Stockport and ensure they do not get discharged from hospital back out onto the streets. They then support them to access benefits, drug & alcohol support, healthcare and teach them life skills to sustain a tenancy. Easy fundraising is a 'no cost to you' way to support this vital charity work. Each time you shop using one of the retailers online through the easy fundraising website H3 will receive a donation at no extra cost to you. <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/h3hhh> Most big retailers support purchasing through this site. For those that are Amazon customers it's <https://smile.amazon.com/> and choose to support H3.

Last weekend's collections(excludes standing orders) : OLATA- £421.06 St Ambrose- £127.45 St Vincent's- £105.54
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 its 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 Christmas cards 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.

Our Lady's News

Visit of the House Bound: Fr Martin will be visiting the sick and housebound in Our Lady's this Tuesday and Wednesday.

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

Confessions are available at St Ambrose' after Mass on Thursday mornings.

Ministers of the Eucharist. As above with Our Lady's.

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

Christmas Raffle. Raffle tickets will be on sale again after Mass this Saturday. Donations of bottles will be particularly welcome and many thanks to everyone who has bought tickets so far The raffle will be held on Saturday 18th December.

St Vincent's News:

Confessions are available at St Vincent's after Mass on Wednesday mornings.

LAMBs Christmas Disco Wednesday 8th December at 7pm. Help rearranging the chairs would be appreciated after Mass on Wednesday and again at 9pm after the event.

Gift Mass - the toy collection will take place at the offertory during Mass on 12th December. Please ensure each wrapped gift shows the gender and age range that is suitable for that gift. Caritas would be grateful if we could arrange to take the gifts over to Wythenshawe if anyone has a big car suitable.

Service of Light - 4pm December 12th - a time of quiet reflection away from the bustle of everyday life lead by Veronica Martin.

Please remember Pat Melson who sadly passed away last Sunday. Pat was a long standing parishioner here at St Vincent's known to many of us. Our thoughts and prayers are with Pat and her family at this time.

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, Adswold Road, Stockport, SK3 3QA, St. Vincent de Paul, 29 Handley Road, Bramhall, Stockport, SK7 3E

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