



# The Parish of Our Lady & St John & Christ the King

Goring - on - Thames & Woodcote

Parish Priest: Mgr. Antony Conlon PhD HEL



Assistant Priest; Fr Jacob Lewis (Retired) Tel. 01635 578714

## PARISH BULLETIN: 29/10/2017. THIRTIETH ORDINARY SUNDAY (A). Ps Wk 2

**OFFERTORY COLLECTION 22/10/17** (Envs & cash) = **£490.00p.** Grateful thanks to all who contribute to the upkeep of our 2 churches.

Sunday Mass times	6.00pm (Sat)	10.00am	11.30(Woodcote)
Readers : 28-29 Oct	J O'Donohue	D Browne/K Karding	Hart Family
" 4-5 Nov	C & D Sexon	J & M Shinkwin	Mr & Mrs Sims
Cleaning/Flowers next w/e	Group A (Goring)	Heath Family	////////////////////
Counters (next 3 weeks)	30/10 - D Godley	6/11 - C Quinton	13/11 - W O'Connell

**PRAYERS REQUESTED FOR** - Helen Brown, Michael Browne, Nick Browne, Betty Browne, Mary Hoban, Rev Paul Boughton & John Hennessy.

**ADVENT GROUPS** - lists and details for those wishing to join these annual ecumenical reflection/prayer groups are available. Please sign up as soon as possible to be assured of joining the group that you would like to be in.

### NOVEMBER - MONTH OF THE HOLY SOULS

Mass will be offered each day for all for whom prayers are requested. Use the envelopes provided to submit your list of names.

Last weekend's collection for **Mission Sunday** amounted to £184.00p. Thank you to all who contributed.

**CONFIRMATION** - Teenagers in secondary school are eligible to be prepared for this Sacrament. Names, D.o.b., and addresses please, to Fr Antony. Preparation begins in the New Year.

**CHRISTMAS SHOEBOXES** - Through Operation Christmas Child, needy children round the world receive a shoebox as an unconditional gift of love, based on need, regardless of background or religion. Please consider packing up a box (or two) this year. Leaflets with full instructions are available at the back of the church, together with a few empty shoeboxes. Please deliver filled boxes to **4 Nuns Acre, Goring**, by **5<sup>th</sup> November**. If you need them to be collected, or have any queries, please contact Mary Ann Harding at 01491 873641.

### REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY 12 Nov:

Please note: To allow for time to arrive at the Village Memorial by 11am for the united service, **Sunday Mass (A)** (requiem for the Dead of the Wars) will commence at 9.45am Please come in good time.

### FEASTS & SAINTS THIS WEEK;

**ALL SAINTS** - Originally called All Hallows in these islands (hence the day before, All Hallows Evening or Halloween) this celebration reminds us all of our heavenly goal and those countless souls who enjoy that gift of eternal happiness with God. Some are famous; most known only to a few or to God and the whole Court of Heaven.

**All Souls** - The day of prayer for the dead who, pardoned, are being purified of all traces of sin and its effects. They are justly called the Holy Souls.

**Martin de Porres** - (1579-1639) Born in Lima, Peru, he was a Dominican lay-brother of whom accounts of his work for the poor life show him to have been both saintly and exceptionally caring.

**Charles Borromeo** (1538-1584) Archbishop of Milan and a cardinal at 24, he turned out to be a most devout and hard-working servant of church and people. He died aged only 46.

**ALL SAINTS** - Holyday of Obligation, Wed. 1st Nov. - Mass at 6pm Tue & 10 am & 12 noon, in Woodcote on Wed. All Souls - Mass at 9.30am & 12.00 noon, in Woodcote.

On the weekend of 4-5 November there will be a special collection for the Johnson Fund (for elderly, sick & retired priests).

### SERVICES AND MASS TIMES THIS WEEK

Sat 28 October  
6.00pm - Parish  
Sun 29 - THIRTIETH ORDINARY SUNDAY  
10.00am -  
11.30am -  
Mon 30 - feria  
10.00am -  
Tue 31 - feria  
9.30am -  
6.00pm - Parish  
Wed 1 Nov - **ALL SAINTS** (Obligation)  
10.00am - November Dead Lists  
12.00 - (Woodcote)  
Thu 2 - All Souls  
9.30am - November Dead Lists  
12.00 - (Woodcote) Ashton Family Intention

#### Sunday Hymns

80  
454  
473  
468

Fri 3 - St Martin de Porres  
9.00am - **Holy hour, followed by Mass at 10am**

Holy Souls Int  
Sat 4 - St Charles Borromeo  
6.00pm - Parish

Sun 5 Nov - THIRTY-FIRST ORDINARY SUNDAY  
10.00am - November Dead Lists  
11.30am -

**Confessions** - 11.00-11.30am and after 6.00pm Mass on Saturday. Confessions at Woodcote; 12.00-12.30pm on 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month. Confession is also available at other times on request.

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# CATHOLIC HERALD

ESTABLISHED 1888

## Fifty years of inhumanity

If you leaf through the transcripts of the parliamentary debates over the Abortion Bill, much was made, both for and against abortion, of the unborn child as a "potential human life". In the 1960s, those who insisted that human life began at conception were still often considered to be dogmatic, at best philosophically romantic, in their assertions. Human life began, so it was commonly held, at some indeterminate point between conception and birth which could be debated. The recognisable value of the woman's life, and her rights under law, were only weighed against the "potential" life and rights of the unborn child.

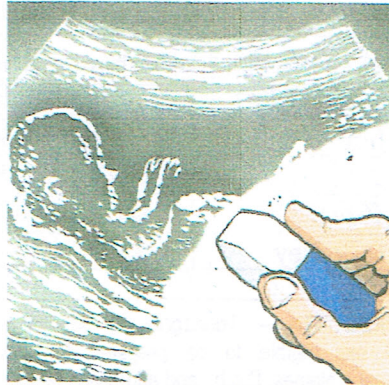
Yet today, after more than eight million abortions in Britain, it is a medically established and accepted fact that a new, independent and identifiable genetic human life does, in fact, begin at conception. This raises an inescapable question for our whole society: when do human rights begin?

Our language of human rights, legal and philosophical, has been formed with the implicit understanding that human life and human rights are indivisible propositions. But our understanding of when human life begins has evolved.

If, as we now know, human life does begin at conception, the legal presumption would seem to be that such human life is, at the very least, invested with the human right to life. To argue against this requires that we split human "personhood" from human life, and posit that personhood (and therefore rights) are conferred or acquired through societal membership or participation. There are a number of serious repercussions to this train of thought.

If personhood is not simply tested against the presence of human life, what then is the test? If abortion is taken as a self-contained issue, perhaps there can be coherent argument for some sort of viability test, whether it be brain activity, an independent heartbeat, response to external stimuli, ability to breathe outside the womb, etc.

But personhood and human rights cannot be debated just within the womb. Once we accept that there is such a



thing, philosophically or legally, as a human life which is not a person, this can and will be applied to human life outside the womb too. Here the different viability tests make for uncomfortable failing cases: people in comas may lack brain activity, people with pacemakers may not be able to sustain their own heartbeat independently, people on ventilators cannot breathe for themselves. Does someone lacking any or all of these criteria lose their personhood and human rights? As the debate about euthanasia develops across Europe, these are not idle questions.

Of course, we are all comfortable with some rights being qualified by our ability to exercise them. We do not confer the right to vote, for example, until an age when we are capable of using it

### *The Act created categories of human life which are lesser or even non-persons*

responsibly. But, at least in Britain, we are supposed to accept that the right to life is absolute: even those guilty of the most appalling crimes are not subjected to the death penalty. And we hold this right to life to be innate, not acquired. Life is spared not out of appreciation for the social contribution of serial killers and rapists, but because we assign an absolute value to human life as life.

As members of a modern progressive democracy, we should be horrified by

the idea of non-persons or lesser-persons. If personhood and rights are no longer to be held as synonymous with the fact of human life, and are somehow linked to societal participation, what does this portend for how we might come to treat the disabled? Indeed, the very status, value and personhood of the disabled is unquestionably bound up in how our society views abortion.

However much it makes for an easier social truce on the subject, treating the right to life as a discrete question of viability and social membership in the womb will simply not wash, either as philosophy or legal theory.

If the right to human life can be essentially means-tested, we can only skirt the wider implications for the elderly, the infirm and the disabled for so long. Sooner or later we have to make a determination: is the right to life inalienable to human life, or conferred by society. And we have to make this determination mindful that what rights we acknowledge society can give, we are implicitly affirming it can take away again.

Fifty years ago, the Abortion Act was brought into law with the purported aim of protecting the lives of expectant mothers. It is impossible to claim with a straight face that, even considering the woman alone, abortion in Britain is practiced as a life-saving endeavour. On the contrary, the statistics show it is overwhelmingly performed with the sole intention of ending a human life.

Today, the Abortion Act enshrines a legal distinction not just between the born and the unborn, but also between "viable" and "unviable" human life, between the disabled and the so-called normal. Regardless of whether Parliament intended this at the time, it has created legal categories of human life which are lesser or even non-persons under the law. It has enshrined the idea that the most basic of human rights, to life itself, is subject to vague and arbitrary criteria which we as a society have barely begun to acknowledge, let alone consider the wider consequences of. This is the inhuman legacy of a dehumanising law.