



**Roman Catholic
Diocese of Middlesbrough
Adult Formation**

**Celebrating the
Assumption of Our Lady**

**Nine Days of Prayer
Saturday 8th to Sunday 16th August 2020
'Mini Retreat'**



The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary 2020

As our churches make the very gradual return to public Masses, albeit, on a limited capacity, many people may still feel unable to attend one of these Masses and the obligation to attend Sunday Mass continues to be suspended. Many of our clergy continue to live stream their Masses and prayer liturgies. This has proven to be a source of great comfort for those with access to technology and are able to use it. For others, not being able to get to church for Mass increases their sense of isolation and loneliness.

This 'Mini Retreat' is an attempt to ease the burden on those who are unable to watch streamed Masses and other liturgies but can also be used by anyone.

The pages of this booklet are intended to help us journey through the nine days culminating in the Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady, by using the Gospel passages of the day taken from Holy Mass.

We offer a structure for your prayer time and suggest that you choose a time during the day that suits you best. This could be the time that you would usually attend Mass or, early in the morning, midday, evening, whatever suits you.



This may supplement your usual daily prayer so please don't stop praying your everyday prayers.

Each day is structured in the following way:

- ◆ Be still and become aware of God's presence
- ◆ Opening prayer
- ◆ Psalm
- ◆ Thanksgiving to God
- ◆ Reading the Gospel of the day which is included
- ◆ Reflecting and praying with the Gospel
- ◆ Act of Spiritual Communion
- ◆ Closing prayer

Take things at your own pace, take as long as you wish, there's no rush.

May God's blessing be with you and on your home.

Saturday 8th August—St Dominic

St Dominic founded the Order of Preachers (Dominicans). The Order was approved by the Holy See in 1216 and has had a huge impact on the life of the Church.

Wherever he went Dominic showed himself in word and deed to be a man of the Gospel. During the day no one was more community minded or pleasant towards his brothers and associates. During the night hours no one was more persistent in every kind of vigil and supplication. (Source: taken from various writings on the history of the Order of Preachers).

Become still, aware of the awesome presence of God who never ceases to be with us.

Bless yourself in the + Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Opening Prayer

We fly to your patronage, O holy Mother of God, despise not our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us from all dangers, O glorious and blessed Virgin. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God: that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Lord Jesus Christ, you have given your Mother, Mary, to be our Mother, ready at every moment to help us: grant as we pray before her image and call on her for help, that we may always be faithful to the graces that are ours through your death and resurrection. May the life they bring us be to your glory on earth and our eternal happiness in heaven.

Amen.

Personal Prayer and recollection; As well as thanking and giving praise to God, we remind ourselves of the needs of our family, friends, community, wider world, we pray especially for those affected by Covid-19 and we remember our own personal needs.

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke 9:57-62

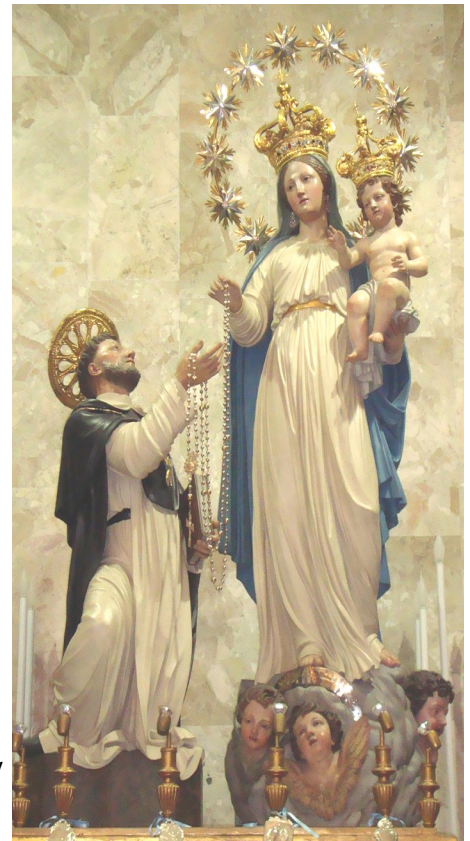
As Jesus and his disciples travelled along they met a man on the road who said to him, 'I will follow you wherever you go.' Jesus answered, 'Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.'

Another to whom he said, 'Follow me,' replied, 'Let me go and bury my father first.' But he answered, 'Leave the dead to bury their dead; your duty is to go and spread the news of the kingdom of God.'

Another said, 'I will follow you, sir, but first let me go and say goodbye to my people at home.' Jesus said to him, 'Once the hand is laid on the plough, no one who looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.'

Silent meditation on the Gospel: Is there a sentence or paragraph that seems to resonate with me? What is my reaction to it? Read over that part of the text a couple of times, reflecting and praying with it.

Give thanks to God for what he has revealed to you during your prayer time.



Say one Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be and then make your act of Spiritual Communion:

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

Concluding this time in prayer: May the Lord bless us and keep us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life. Amen

Sunday 9 August—19th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Follow prayer format as on page 3 except...

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew 14:22-33

Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear.



Immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid." Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Monday 10 August—St Lawrence, Deacon and Martyr

Lawrence was one of the seven deacons of the Church of Rome and was executed on 10th August 258, four days after Sixtus II and his companions. By now, few of the facts of his life are known for certain: he was probably a Spaniard from Toledo. A basilica was built over Lawrence's tomb fifty years after his death by the Emperor Constantine, and the anniversary of his martyrdom was kept as a solemn feast..

Follow prayer format as on page 3 except...

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to John 12:24-26

Jesus said to his disciples:
'I tell you most solemnly,
unless a wheat grain falls on the ground and dies,
it remains only a single grain,
but if it dies,
it yields a rich harvest.
Anyone who loves his life loses it;
anyone who hates his life in this world
will keep it for eternal life.
If a man serves me he must follow me,
wherever I am, my servant will be there too.
If anyone serves me, my Father will honour him.'



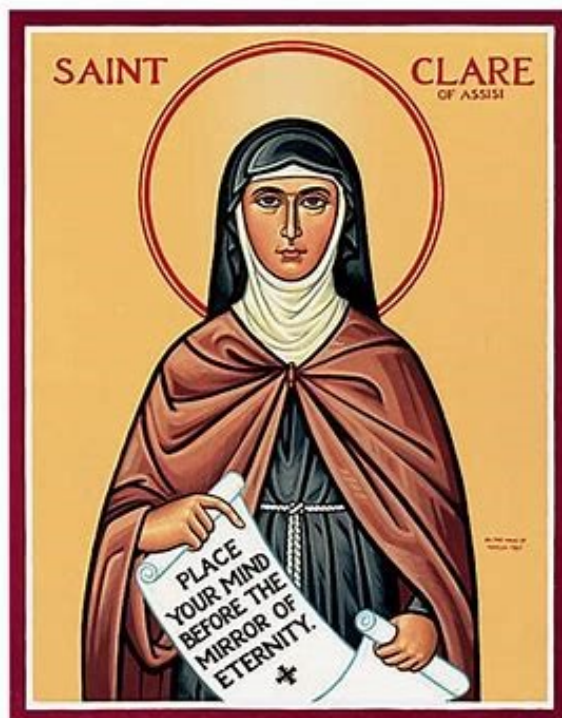
Tuesday 11 August—St Clare, Virgin

St Clare was born at Assisi and came under the influence of St Francis. She left home at the age of 18 and, under Francis' guidance, began a community that grew to become the order of the Poor Clares. In its radical attachment to poverty the Rule of the order was much more severe than that of any other order of nuns. Clare died at Assisi in 1253.

Follow prayer format as on page 3 except...

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew 19:27-29

Peter spoke to Jesus: 'What about us?' he said, 'We have left everything and followed you. What are we to have then?' Jesus said to him, 'I tell you solemnly, when all is made new and the Son of Man sits on his throne of glory, you will yourselves sit on twelve thrones to judge the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses, brothers, sisters, father, mother, children or land for the sake of my name will be repaid a hundred times over, and also inherit eternal life.'



Wednesday 12 August



Crucifix at Lady Chapel, Osmotherley

Follow prayer format as on page 3 except...

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew 18:15-21

Jesus said to his disciples: 'If your brother does something wrong, go and have it out with him alone, between your two selves. If he listens to you, you have won back your brother. If he does not listen, take one or two others along with you: the evidence of two or three witnesses is required to sustain any charge. But if he refuses to listen to these, report it to the community, treat him like a pagan or a tax collector. 'I tell you solemnly, whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven.'

'I tell you solemnly once again, if two of you on earth agree to ask anything at all, it will be granted to you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three meet in my name, I shall be there with them.'

Thursday 13 August

“God always forgives! He never tires of forgiving. It is we who tire of asking forgiveness. But He never tires of forgiving. Indeed, when Peter asks Jesus: ‘How often shall I forgive, seven times?’ he received an eloquent reply: ‘Not seven times, but seventy times seven.’ In other words, ‘always,’ because this is how God forgives: always. Therefore, if you have lived a life of many sins, many bad things, but at the end, contritely ask for forgiveness, He forgives you straight away. He always forgives.” (Pope Francis)



Follow prayer format as on page 3 except...

**A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew
18:21-29**

Peter went up to Jesus and said, ‘Lord, how often must I forgive my brother if he wrongs me? As often as seven times?’ Jesus answered, ‘Not seven times, I tell you, but seventy-seven times. ‘And so the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who decided to settle his accounts with his servants. When reckoning began, they brought him a man who owed ten thousand talents; but he had no means of paying, so his master gave orders that he should be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, to meet the debt. At this the servant threw himself down at his master’s feet. ‘Give me time’ he said, ‘and I will pay the whole sum.’ And the servant’s master felt so sorry for him that he let him go and cancelled the debt. Now as this servant went out, he happened to meet a fellow servant who owed him one hundred denarii; and he seized him by the throat and began to throttle him. ‘Pay what you owe me’ he said. His fellow servant fell at his feet and implored him, saying, ‘Give me time and I will pay you.’ But the other would not agree; on the contrary, he had him thrown into prison till he should pay the debt. His fellow servants were deeply distressed when they saw what had happened, and they went to their master and reported the whole affair to him. Then the master sent for him. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said. I cancelled all that debt of yours when you appealed to me. Were you not bound, then, to have pity on your fellow servant just as I had pity on you?’ And in his anger the master handed him over to the torturers till he should pay all his debt. And that is how my heavenly Father will deal with you unless you each forgive your brother from your heart.’

Jesus had now finished what he wanted to say, and he left Galilee and came into the part of Judaea which is on the far side of the Jordan.



Friday 14 August—St Maximillian Kolbe, Priest and Martyr

St Maximillian Kolbe (1894-1941) was born near Lodz in Poland. He joined the Conventual Franciscans. Marked by an ardent devotion to the Blessed Virgin, who appeared to him as a child, he set up the Militia Immaculate, preached Marian consecration and founded monasteries in Niepokalanow (Poland) and Nagasaki (Japan). Imprisoned by the Nazis in Auschwitz, he offered himself in exchange for a father who was to be starved to death. St John Paul II Canonised him in 1982 and proclaimed him the patron of the 'suffering' twentieth century.

'Let us remember that love lives through sacrifice and is nourished by giving...Without sacrifice there is no love.'

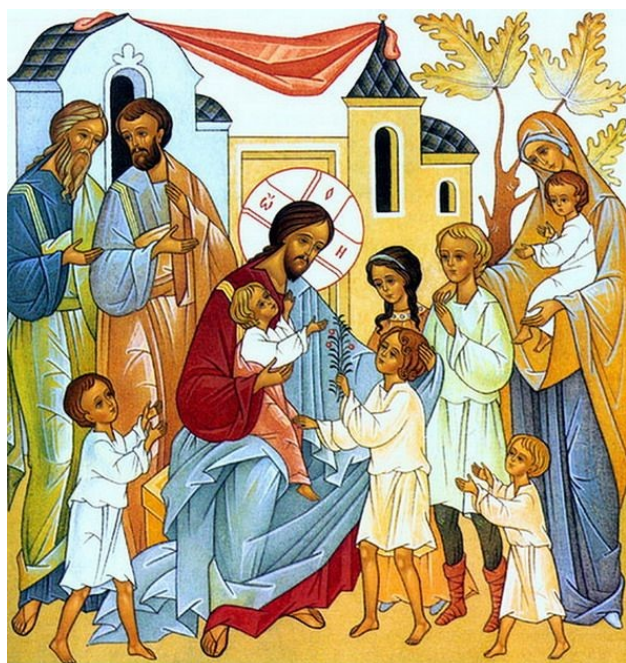
St Maximillian Kolbe



Follow prayer format as on page 3 except...

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew 19:3-12

Some Pharisees approached him, and to put him to the test they said, 'Is it against the Law for a man to divorce his wife on any pretext whatever?' He answered, 'Have you not read that the Creator from the beginning made them male and female and that he said: This is why a man leaves his father and mother and becomes attached to his wife, and the two become one flesh? They are no longer two, therefore, but one flesh. So then, what God has united, human beings must not divide.' They said to him, 'Then why did Moses command that a writ of dismissal should be given in cases of divorce?' He said to them, 'It was because you were so hard-hearted, that Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but it was not like this from the beginning. Now I say this to you: anyone who divorces his wife -- I am not speaking of an illicit marriage -- and marries another, is guilty of adultery.' The disciples said to him, 'If that is how things are between husband and wife, it is advisable not to marry.' But he replied, 'It is not everyone who can accept what I have said, but only those to whom it is granted. There are eunuchs born so from their mother's womb, there are eunuchs made so by human agency and there are eunuchs who have made themselves so for the sake of the kingdom of Heaven. Let anyone accept this who can.'



Saturday 15 August

Follow prayer format as on page 3 except...

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew 19:13-15

People brought little children to Jesus, for him to lay his hands on them and say a prayer. The disciples turned them away, but Jesus said, 'let the little children alone, and do not stop them coming to me, for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.' Then he laid his hands on them and went on his way.

Sunday 16 August—The Assumption of Our Lady into Heaven

“Being most glorious Mother of Christ our saviour and our God, the giver of life and immortality, she is given life by him and shares bodily incorruptibility for all eternity with him who raised her from the grave and drew her up to him in a way that only he can understand”

(Extract from the Apostolic Constitution of Pope Pius XII on the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary)

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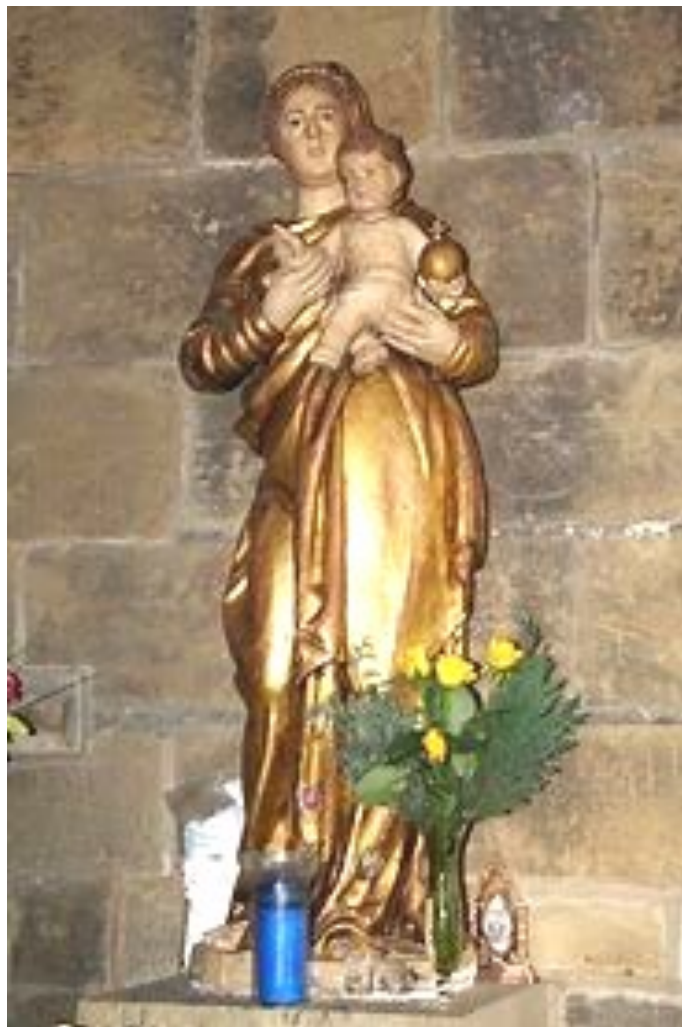
A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke 1:39-56

Mary set out at that time and went as quickly as she could into the hill country to a town in Judah. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. Now it happened that as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She gave a loud cry and said, 'Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord? Look, the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy. Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled.' And Mary said: 'My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour; because he has looked upon the humiliation of his servant. Yes, from now onwards all generations will call me blessed, for the Almighty has done great things for me. Holy is his name, and his faithful love extends age after age to those who fear him. He has used the power of his arm, he has routed the proud of heart. He has pulled down princes from their thrones and exalted the lowly. He has filled the starving with good things, sent the rich away empty. He has come to the help of Israel his servant, mindful of his faithful love -according to the promise he made to our ancestors -- of his mercy to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.' Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months and then went home.

Follow prayer format as on page 3 except...

The Memorare (Before or after Act of Spiritual Communion)

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that any one who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thy intercession, was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother. To thee I come; before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions; but in thy clemency hear and answer me. Amen.



Statue of the Virgin Mary and the child Jesus at Lady Chapel, Osmotherley

We hope that you have found this resource a useful help to your spiritual life and that the Year of the Word continues to bear fruit in your journey with God.

Sources for Scripture readings and reflections:

The Jerusalem Bible

Universalis

The Gospel of Matthew—A Spiritual and Pastoral Reading (Pope Francis)

