

The Christian Community

Movement for Religious Renewal

Hollywood Congregation

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Newsletter for the week of Sunday 4 July.

Dear friends,

Summer has started, the festive season of John the Baptist.

In our Hollywood congregation we are still facing the same restrictions with masks and distancing and there is no knowing when they will finally be lifted.

But we are now able to travel at least within Britain and Ireland and this is certainly noticeable.

Sunday services have not been as busy as they were earlier in the year.

This means that there is more space in the chapel so I would like to start from the 4th of July to offer communion again on a Sunday for those who want it.

If no more than 3 people at a time come forward we can manage to keep our distance.

Then I have two other announcements for the Hollywood congregation: Marian McPolin phoned me to say that on Friday morning, 2 July she will be going into the Ulster hospital to have cancer surgery.

Can we think of her especially that day and carry her in our prayers, so that she can feel our love and support at this challenging time in her life.

And then next Monday, 5 July it will be a year since Christel died.

Ciaran has asked if we can celebrate a service to remember her and we will do that on Saturday 10 July at 10.00.

Afterwards we will have refreshments and an invitation to join Ciaran for a walk along the coastal path.

And then for everyone, please find with this newsletter also a copy of our new program which goes up to Michaelmas. For those of you, who get this newsletter by email; please let me know if you would like a printed copy then I will send you one on request.

Ben

Hollywood

St Johns

Wednesday 30 th June	The Act of Consecration of Man	10.00
Wednesday 7 th July	The Act of Consecration of Man	10.00
Saturday 10 th July	The Act of Consecration of Man	10.00
A special service remembering Christel, afterwards refreshments and a walk along the coast		

Glencraig

Thursday 1 st July	The Act of Consecration of Man	9.30
Thursday 8 th July	The Act of Consecration of Man	9.30

Mourne Grange

Friday 2 nd July	Talk: "Bees of paradise"	16.00
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Clanabogan

Saturday 3 rd July	The Act of Consecration of Man	10.30
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The gospel for Sunday 4 July is John 1: 19-39

This is the testimony of John, when the Jewish leaders sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" Freely and openly he made confession. He confessed, "I am not the Christ, the Messiah."

Then they asked him, "Who are you then? Are you Elijah?" And he said, "No, I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." Then they said, "Who *are* you? What answer are we to give to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?"

He said in the words of the prophet Isaiah, "I am the voice of one crying in the loneliness: Prepare the way so that the Lord may enter into the inmost soul."

And those who had been sent by the Pharisees asked him, "Why do you baptize if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?"

John answered them, "I baptize with water. But someone is standing in your midst whom you do not know, who comes after me although he was before me. I am not worthy even to untie the strap of his sandals."

This took place in Bethany near the mouth of the Jordan where John was baptizing.



The next day John sees Jesus coming to him, and says, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes upon himself the burden of the sin of the world. He it is of whom I said: 'After me comes one who was before me, for he is greater than I .' Even I did not know him; but for this I have come, and have baptized with water, so that human souls in Israel might become able to experience the revelation of his being."

And John testified: "I saw how the Spirit descended upon him as a dove from the heavens and remained united with him. I did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend, so that it remains united with him, he it is who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I saw this, and so I testify that this is God's Son."

The next day John was again standing there, and two of his disciples were with him. And as he saw Jesus walking past, he said, "Behold, the Lamb of God." The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, "What are you seeking?" They answered, "Rabbi, where are you staying?" He said, "Come and you will see!" And they came and saw where he stayed, and remained with him all that day. It was about the tenth hour.



A homily on John 1: 19-34

Both illness and recovery are mysterious processes. Out of the blue, it seems, we "catch" a cold. We run a fever. No matter what we do, we don't recover until the illness has run its course. Then healing, equally mysterious, arrives too, on its own. We can experience healing as grace.

In the seasonal prayer, St. John the Baptist speaks in words of flame. His flame-words are described first of all as health-bearing; for all human souls are suffering from an illness, the sickness of being separated from their own divine origin. John's health-bearing flame word is like a soul-fever, designed aid the process of healing.

His flame words are also 'guilt-conscious'. In the light and heat of the fire of his words, we become aware that we are ill. We were created in God's image and likeness. This sickness means that we are failing to live up to our truly divine human nature and task. The sickness of sin has laid us low.

And once awareness arrives, burning shame and guilt are the result.

But John's words are also 'prophetic of grace'. In our state of illness we look for the medicine and the healing. And it has indeed been given us. It is in the descending of the true Spirit of the human being, the Healing Spirit, into Jesus, the Christ. He takes upon Himself the burden of the sin, the separation of the world. He is the medicine for our illness. The burning fever of the longing for healing is found in the depth of the heart. It is this flame of longing that begins the process of purification, in which the heart rises in love toward our Healer. *Health-bearing, conscious of guilt, prophetic of grace* describe the interaction between us human beings and the divine.