

# Newsletter for St Knud Lavard Church

## English Translation – Summer 2016

The present English translation is a translation of the articles in the Danish Summer edition of the Newsletter for St. Knud Lavard's Church. For pictures and illustrations, please refer to the Danish edition of the Newsletter.

### Dear Congregation

*By Fr. Alren*

Now we are in the middle of summer. The sun is shining and when it is hot, some people say "pew, it is too hot" and others say "hmm it is a lovely warmth". When it is cool, some say "hmm lovely cool" and others say "poor weather". I can imagine God's dilemma without knowing who He can please. It is also an experience to be parents. When one of the children wants to travel to the U.S. on holiday, and another wants to travel to Australia at the same time and maybe there is a third who wants to travel to Sri Lanka... Then we can understand God's situation. God, who wants to do good for us, give you and me and any human being what we need. God can't please us according to our own wishes, but he gives us what we need and takes care of us as a loving Father.

*The Lord is tenderness and pity.  
Slow to anger and rich in faithful love;  
His indignation does not last forever,  
Nor his resentment remain for all time;  
He does not treat us as our sins deserve,  
Nor repay us as befits our offences. (Psalm 103, 8-11)*

This psalm was written by King David after his great experience of God's mercy. He sinned against God and his neighbour Uria. God showed His mercy to David and forgave him his sins. This, we have also experienced many times. He who has faith in mind, recognise it and thank God for his gift of mercy and go ahead and invite others to experience the same. This is what Pope Francis has done this year. I think, he is one of those, who have experienced the Lord's great mercy. He would also like us to experience the same thing that he has experienced. Already a week after he was elected Pope, he said, "we get tired of praying for God's mercy, but God never tires of showing his mercy." I think this is a witness of the Pope's own experience of God's mercy.

Therefore, he invites the whole Church to preach God's merciful grace that is the essence of the gospel. To be merciful like our heavenly Father is the motto of this Year of Mercy. Today, people have a great need to experience God's mercy. Profound changes in people's lifestyles have happened and they affect the social and cultural life of society and therefore our life of faith. As a result, there are lots of feelings such as

fatigue, loneliness, hatred, anger, lack of trust in each other, unwillingness to forgive and a great lack of man's belief in God. Let us as a congregation accept the Pope's invitation, change this unfortunate situation and be the witness through which, others can experience God's love and mercy.

**Fr. Alren**

## **The Chronicle**

### **Baptisms**

Helena Maria Monberg Hansen, Minna Reiter Nielsen, Kaavia Ragu, Kogilan Ragu, Leonel KUKI, Cassandra Helaine Sinoy Rasmussen, Yohanna Paulina Wissam, Liva Lauge Uttenthal, Augustus Anton Ramos Rohde, Carolina Marie Rohde, Hailey Else Omondi Schmidt, Marie Wellerdiek, Demise Thuc Khue Tran, Nikolaj Kaj Suslon Pedersen.

### **First Communion**

Kavisan Satkunasingam, Clara Madeleine Stelsberg Knudsen, Mona Natalie Herman, Kenny Lukas Gashikanwa Kristensen, Emily Maria Heeran, Ida Languad, Emilie Louise Nissen, Anne Maria Favores Cabando, Isabella Madrona, Jacob Andreas Phung Vo, Celina Cruz Schneider, Adam Al-Khoury, Petros Al-Khoury, Kaaviya Ragu, Jassica Montecino.

### **Confirmation**

Alexander Venturelli Christensen, Clara Maria Kreisberg, Christin Vie Osol, Anna Maria Vo, Emma Drostby, Jakob Møller-Jørgensen, Josephine Motet Jessen, Mille Volf Huusom, Niels Holger Lind, Nikolai Bo Enemark Johansen, Shania Teresa Mortensen, Thomas Drostby, Tobias Tin Nguyen, Victor Fejø, Roselle Mae Diola Manansala.

### **Weddings**

Sana Riyad Abdul Jabbar & Zydoon Neesan  
Charmina Lourdes Ramos Rode & Jesper Rode

**Accepted into full communion with the Catholic Church** Bendte Juul Hansen, Jesper Rohde.

### **Deaths**

Vibeke Marie, Frantz Jacobsen, Carmalita C Sanchez Nørkjær, Jan Marek, Tuede-Elle Bajna, Francisco Fernandez Gonzales, Anna Josefa Nielsen, Birgit Maria Theresia Wohlert, Maya Westh.

## **Do you want to be an Altar Server**

Would you like to be an Altar Server at either the Danish or English Masses, then please contact:

**Kristoffer Martensen, Michael Nguyen or Sebastian Ebert.**

## This is happening – Calendar

### September

Sunday 4 <sup>th</sup>	10.00 am	Family Mass
	11.15 am	Confirmation preparation course starts (runs every Sunday)
Saturday 10 <sup>th</sup>	10.00 am	Church Cleaning
Sunday 11 <sup>th</sup>	11.15 am	First Communion course starts (runs every Sunday)

### October

Sunday 2 <sup>nd</sup>	10.00 am	Family Mass
Saturday 8 <sup>th</sup>	10.00 am	Church Cleaning

### November

Sunday 6 <sup>th</sup>	10.00 am	Family Mass
Saturday 12 <sup>th</sup>	10.00 am	Church Cleaning

### December

Sunday 4 <sup>th</sup>	10.00 am	Family Mass
Saturday 10 <sup>th</sup>	10.00 am	Church Cleaning

## Mass Times

<b>Tuesday</b>	Mass	5 pm	Danish
<b>Wednesday</b>	Rosary Mass Adoration	5.30 pm 6 pm 6.30 – 7 pm	English
<b>Thursday</b>	Mass Lunch	11 am After Mass	Danish
<b>Friday</b>	Rosary Adoration Mass	3.30 pm 4 – 5 pm 5 pm	Danish
<b>Saturday</b>	Rosary Mass	4.30 pm 5 pm	Danish
<b>Sunday</b>	Mass Rosary Mass	10 am 12.30 pm 1 pm	Danish English English

## Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting, May 1<sup>st</sup> 2016

The meeting for 2016 was held during church coffee after the Danish Sunday Mass. Present were about 30 members of the parish incl. parish priest Alren Soosaipillai (AS), parish council chairman John-Erik Stig Hansen (JSH) and parish council members Tove Elisabeth Reiter (TER) and Susan Bjerregaard Nielsen (SBN), who wrote the minutes.

JSH reported some significant changes in the church during the past year. We have a new parish priest as pastor Soosaipillai has returned to our parish, after about 4 years in Roskilde, which we are pleased with.

Then we have had a considerable increase in the number of parish members, as members of the parishes in Birkerød and Hørsholm have joined us. Thus, we now have 2,158 registered members. But there are also many non-members who come and visit our church and participate in the services. Altogether, Communion was distributed 18,830 times in 2015 to both members and non-members. This is a nice big figure and a testimony of our church's significance and activities beyond the permanent members and their participation.

At the same time there are also 41 active parish members who voluntarily contribute to the church's operations in different ways. However, we are always looking for more volunteers for the many tasks, so if you should have any spare time and would like to make a difference for the life of the church and its growth, then you are very welcome to contact the parish priest or parish council chairman.

In the past year, we have completed the work of a vision statement for our Church, which is:

*We want to be a visible expression of the presence of Christ in the world through an active and inclusive Catholic congregation, which supports community members' life in faith and changes the surrounding community through message and good example*

Our income from the offertory and church taxes has increased in line with the increased number of members in the congregation. With this development, we now have nearly enough savings to realise our wish for an extension of our parish hall, which is very appropriate as it now houses more people. On the expenditure side, it should be mentioned that we have invested in a new sound system in the church in the past year, which now makes it possible for everyone in the church to hear what is being said.

Other topics that were raised at the meeting were:

The conversion of St. Knud Lavard School to an independent institution made it necessary to reorganise the plot lines, where the school and the church are located.

The nearby construction on Kanalvej has led to excessive vibrations, which apparently has caused damages to the church building. The Ansgar Foundation, who owns the church buildings, has the responsibility for making any compensation claim.

The extension of the parish hall has been described on the sketch plan, but work to commence is awaiting the permission of the Ansgar Foundation.

Although the education courses for children for First Communion and Confirmation are running well, the priest and parish council wish to increase the efforts put into youth work. In the past spring, our attempts to introduce evening events for adults only resulted in a very modest attendance, so these efforts were stopped again.

The annual parish meeting was concluded in a positive atmosphere, reflecting the prevailing spirit of the congregation. Today we have a functioning community with many resources. However, we can be even better at mobilising these resources for the benefit of both ourselves as for the surrounding community.

## **Caritas Flea Market**

*By Tuulikki Albeck*

The flea market this winter has only been a moderate success, but we have gathered about 3.000 DKK in total for Caritas. Clothes and books have indeed been free until now. The books will still be free in order to recycle as many as possible.

The flea market is closed until the fall, but you can still hand in your 'fleas' in the basement, which you are very welcome to do. We continue in the autumn; once a month. Since it is quite boring to stand in the basement, and there were only few attendants, I'm only open from 11:00 to 13:00. Therefore, the English congregation needs to come to the flea market before their Mass and not after - unless they can find someone who wants run the market after the Mass from 14:00.

**The dates of flea market this fall are September 18<sup>th</sup>, October 16<sup>th</sup>, November 27<sup>th</sup> and December 18<sup>th</sup>.**

If you want to buy something or just look around at another Sunday, then contact me after the Danish Mass. You can also call or text me. It would be great if someone wanted to help me with the running of the market. We have two rooms in the basement and after summer, the clothes are not longer for free. Remember also glasses for Africa and the stamp box for used stamps, which is placed by hymn books at the back of the church. The glasses can be handed in to me. Also sunglasses!

With a happy Caritas greeting

*Tuulikki Albeck*

## **Confirmation**

When: **June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2017 at 16:00** (the day before Pentecost)

Who is the teacher: John-Erik Stig Hansen, and Fr. Alren is assisting

Course starts: **September 11<sup>th</sup> 2016 at 11:15 in the Parish Hall.**

## Confirmation 2017

*By John-Erik Stig Hansen*

If you are considering confirmation in spring 2017, or if you have children to be confirmed, then it is necessary to attend the mandatory preparation course, which starts on Sunday, September 4<sup>th</sup> 2016.

Most people can be considered to belong to a minority group in one way or another. Some are ginger, others live in Aalborg, some love dancing, and others love hiking. When you are a Catholic, you have a religious identity, which is not shared by the majority in Denmark. There are about 1.2 billion Catholics in the world, but in Denmark we are only about 40,000. It means that as a Catholic, you will often be the only Catholic in a group of peers, e.g. in the school class, and you may encounter certain curiosity about what it means to be a Catholic. Sometimes, you can also encounter situations where you do not have the same attitude as others, and situations where the values you have developed from your family or through the church, are being discussed. You should not be afraid of this - on the contrary; attitudes and values are things that should be debated in order that they may be expressed more clearly, both for oneself and for others. At the same time, you can learn many things when having a good discussion.

As a young Catholic, you meet the same challenges of being young and having to consider issues of adulthood, like any other young person. There may be girlfriend problems, the school may be boring, and mum and dad don't understand you. Maybe you wonder, if you are both uglier and dumber than everyone else, and the future of education and work can seem quite scary. You are not alone in having these kinds of issues, and it can be useful to discuss such issues with others, especially with other people who share your own view of life. Many of these issues are linked to fundamental values, which for a Catholic takes root in the Christian faith.

The Catholic Church exists worldwide and is very old. The Catholic Church proclaims the same message, which Jesus Christ brought to the world 2,000 years ago, and it has a long-standing experience in dealing with all of the most important questions in life. As a young Catholic, you do not only meet the Church during Sunday Mass, but you can also meet the Church represented by other Catholics, who gather together in the name of their Catholic faith. Denmark's Young Catholics (DUK) has a number of camps and other events where you can meet other young Catholics. Apart from simply having fun together, it is also a good opportunity to discuss any issues, which your parents and classmates may not really understand.

Confirmation, or *confirmatio*, is the Sacrament of the evangelist. It reaffirms his faith and livelihood to the congregation and to the bishop. The bishop celebrates the Sacrament as a gift from the Holy Spirit. With this Sacrament, the confirmed is strengthened in the life with a unique mission.

Confirmation can be given once in life - usually at the age of 12-15 years - to a practicing Catholic who has undergone a preparation course. The course lasts about a year and is mandatory. The confirmation course takes place every Sunday (except during holiday periods) in connection with the Sunday Mass at 10 am, in the parish hall of St. Knud Lavard Church, Lyngbygårdsvej 1A, 2800 Kgs. Lyngby. At the first lesson, or soon thereafter, you need to complete an information sheet and bring a copy of your baptism certificate. The course for 2017 is led by John-Erik Stig Hansen, who can be contacted by e-mail: [kursus@firmand.dk](mailto:kursus@firmand.dk). The preparation course starts Sunday, September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

## **First Communion 2016/2017**

*By Eva Maria Linnemann Hansen*

If your child is going for First Communion in 2017, now is the time to register.

**The First Communion course takes place after the Danish Sunday Mass, at 11.15 am to 12 noon, in the parish hall. First time is September 11<sup>th</sup> 2016** and parents are welcome to attend on this first day of the course. Subsequent lessons are without parents.

Registration for First Communion needs to be done by email to: [em.linnemannhansen@gmail.com](mailto:em.linnemannhansen@gmail.com), including the information:

- Full name of the child
- Full name of the parents
- Parents' emails
- Parents' telephone/mobile numbers

**First Communion will take place at 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter, April 30<sup>th</sup> 2017.**

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Eva at [em.linnemannhansen@gmail.com](mailto:em.linnemannhansen@gmail.com).

Looking forward to meeting you and your children!

*Jan, Kristoffer and Eva*

## **Thursday Mass and lunch**

Thursday mornings, there is a Holy Mass at 11 am (in Danish) followed by lunch in the parish hall. Elders of the congregation bring bread and different foods, like salmon, cheese, fruit etc, and then we eat together. You are also welcome. Just bring something along, and we can all share in this meal.

## **Put up with anything**

*By John-Erik Stig Hansen*

*“To anyone who slaps you on one cheek, present the other cheek as well” (Luke 6:29)*

Jesus' call to his listeners at a plain near Capernaum has most certainly been quite controversial, just like it is difficult for most of us today.

In contemporary Jewish culture, the conventional morality of the Old Testament was the principle of “an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth”. We know of the same principle from other periods and cultures, e.g. at the time of the Nordic Vikings, where revenge and retaliation in equal measure was the common standard of justice. And this is certainly not something that is a remote way of thinking in our present time:

One Palestinian assassination triggers with no uncertainty a reprisal from the Israeli side, which is then followed by a new Palestinian attack, which again leads to another attack from the Israelis etc.

In our personal lives, we have all experienced injustice, insult or assault. It starts already as children, where the skirmishes of the school yard may lead to children fighting and crying. As adults, it can be anything from a work colleague to the violent assailant, who commits the injustice, and when our rights are violated, we demand justice, if not outright revenge and retaliation.

It clearly relates to something quite fundamental to our human nature, and we all know the feeling of vindictiveness, which grows from within and which - in the worst case - can take control of us and lead us on a vicious spiral of revenge and hatred. In this machinery of evil, Jesus' call to turn the other cheek, works like grit in the machinery. It is a call to make a radical change away from our fundamental thinking; a call which seems to contradict the order of nature. And maybe it does.

Although Jesus' call is not a call for us to submit ourselves to any wrong doings and accept all injustice, Jesus is showing us a way to get out of the vicious spiral. The world will be better, if we break free of the grip of vindictiveness, by being the first to carry an injustice, tolerate wrongs and forgive the perpetrator. In fact, it is not only the world in general, which is shown a road for the better, but also each one of us is offered an alternative to filling our thoughts with negativity and speculations about larger or smaller injustices, which we may suffer in our daily life.

Should we never resist, but put up with anything? Probably not, except when accommodating the wrong benefits the overall situation, instead of seeking our own gratification or even increase the power of evil. Executioners of torture should not be allowed to continue their work and must be stopped, but to put them through the same suffering only increases the overall pain and torment, and will allow evil to grow.

The call of Jesus is to be opposite of sensitive to violations, but to turn the other cheek does not mean to be indifferent; rather, it is about showing mercy, patience and forgiveness. And this is what each of us wish to be given by God and fellow human beings.

The Vatican plans to canonise six new saints on the 16<sup>th</sup> of May 2017. These are:

- Gianna Molla (1922-1962), who died after having refused a cancer treatment in order to protect her unborn child.
- Paola Elisabetta (1816-1865), founder of The Holy Family Institute.
- Luigi Orione (1872-1940), priest.
- Anibal Maria de Francia (1851-1927), priest.
- José Many Anet y Vives (1833-1901), priest.
- Nimatullah Al-Hardini (1808-1858), priest.

## **Meet Father Jan Hansen – Interview with the first priest from our parish**

### **1. What made you interested in the Catholic Church? And what made you take the decision to convert?**

- It all started with my dissatisfaction with the Danish Lutheran Church, which I used to belong to. Although I was just an ordinary “culture Christian” Dane, I still had an opinion about how the Lutheran Church should be. I was fed up with the growing relativism, where the Lutheran Church changes its position depending on the public opinion or attitudes of politicians.

The deciding issue was the whole controversy surrounding the Lutheran priest, Thorkild Grosbøll, who in 2003 famously stated that he did not believe in God. One thing was the statement coming from a priest, but what eventually made the Lutheran Church superfluous for me, was the subsequent media coverage of Grosbøll, and his struggle to be allowed to remain a priest despite Bishop Lise-Lotte Rebel’s attempt to prevent it.

All this started the process, which led me to break with the Lutheran Church, and the final push in that process was when I witnessed the death of Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI's election shortly after. It made a big impression on me, but also my parents went through the same thoughts of seeking faith elsewhere. We started to attend the Catholic Church shortly after, and the rest is history, as one say ☺

### **2. Which impact did your choice your education have at the time? Did you finish it?**

- My choice to follow the call to priesthood didn’t really influence my education. While I was still considering this call, I was studying engineering at DTU, and I finished my degree in December 2008. Although at that time, I was probably quite far in my decision to follow the call to priesthood, I did not see this as a reason not to complete my education, as the start at the seminary would not clash with my education anyway.

### **3. What made you choose the priesthood? Were there people or events, which inspired you?**

- It was a combination of several things. Firstly, during the period before and after my conversion, I was reflecting a lot about life issues. In particular, I was considering how I really wanted to spend the rest of my life - despite the fact that I was just about to graduate as a civil engineer. It can be said, that it was a kind of existential crisis since I no longer saw a deeper meaning in living an ordinary secular life. Some may just call it a case of “convertitis”, but for me it was a deeper concern about what I wanted to do with my life in light of my “newfound” faith as Christian. Amidst all this, the idea of becoming a priest appeared, although for a long time, I could not quite reconcile myself with this idea.

Secondly, I was about to graduate as an engineer, but I no longer saw a deeper meaning in living my life as an engineer, as I had done previously. The idea of becoming a priest would not leave me, even though I spent a long time to playing “the devil’s advocate”; finding a lot of good arguments to God, why I did not want to be a priest.

In spite of all my arguments, the idea kept coming back to me, which meant that I felt compelled to take it seriously after all. Then, I started to talk to Fr. Alren, who was the second priest with us at St. Knud’s in Lyngby. He was an excellent mentor, and also helped me to accept the call to priesthood. After having spent almost a year considering this call, I finally approached the bishop who graciously welcomed me.

#### **4. What made you choose to become a diocesan priest?**

- Despite the fact that there were plenty of opportunities to become a member of a religious order, and at one point I strongly considered the Dominican Order which remains close to my heart, it was important for me to be able to work in Denmark in the long term, if I were to be a priest. I did not have much desire to end up overseas, particularly because I felt that there was more need for Danish priests here in Denmark, rather than going abroad. When you make a choice, you also exclude something else, so one must always consider which arguments carry the most weight. In my case, it was most important to be able to serve the Church here in Denmark, where the Catholic presence is fairly scarce.

#### **5. Is it difficult to opt out of having your own family and go against the common standards of society?**

- It is obvious, that opting out of having a family is a major part of the reflections regarding the choice of priesthood, while being slightly culturally adverse to the rest of society. There is no doubt that it is a difficult decision, but when outweighing pros and cons, I think that there is great meaning in opting out of having a family and instead try to dedicate my life 100% for the service of God and for the Church... my relatively brief experience as a seminarian and now a pastor has shown me, that it would be practically difficult to make it work, if I also had a family to take care of... Instead, I hope that my choice will be fruitful in relation to my work as a priest, but also that it will get others, especially those outside the church, to wonder and ask questions about what can probe someone to make such a choice... in this way, I hope to show that there is a larger and more important reality, which we must reflect upon.

### **Activities in the English part of our congregation**

*by Susan Bjerregaard Nielsen*

#### **Masses**

On Sundays, we have Mass in English at 1 pm, preceded by Rosary from 12:30. Whether you foreign or Danish, a permanent resident or just visiting for a shorter or longer period of time, you are always welcome to attend the English Mass or any of our activity groups. It is no requirement that you only speak English, that you speak English fluently, or that you don't speak Danish. Everybody is welcome. We also celebrate a quiet weekday Mass in English on Wednesdays at 6 pm.

#### **Website**

On our website, there is also an English folder, with background information about our Church and Mission, past and present newsletters in English as well as information about various activities for English speaking people. The most active groups are the Music Group, the Companions' Group and the Ministry Group. The website can be found at [www.sklk.dk](http://www.sklk.dk).

#### **The Music Group: The English Church Choir**

At the English Sunday Mass, the Music Group is leading the congregation in hymns, responses, and the Psalm and Gospel verse. The Choir meets for rehearsals in the church every Sunday at 11:30 am. After

Mass, rehearsals continue for another hour or so and then we may socialize a bit over a meal in the parish hall.

If you play an instrument, or if you like to sing, you are very welcome to come up to the organ before Mass and speak to the Choir Coordinator, Sumi Olinski. You can also contact her at phone: 30 77 24 23 or email: [sumi.olinski@gmail.com](mailto:sumi.olinski@gmail.com).

### **The Companions' Group**

The Companions' Group is a group of foreign university students and working people living in Denmark – either permanently or for a temporary period of time. They meet to share in friendship and faith in Jesus, and they have many social activities – both at the Church and elsewhere. They also work to help other newcomers to settle in Denmark, as they all know how difficult and hard it can be to live in a foreign country, without knowing customs, people and language, and how helpful it is to have a reference point for social and spiritual life.

On some Sundays they meet after the English mass for a relaxing coffee/tea together or a shared lunch, followed by an informal meeting involving different activities such as group prayer (e.g. rosary, way of the cross or Eucharistic adoration depending on the liturgical time), Gospel reading/sharing, movies with discussion, testimonies and talks on social and religious topics and so on. In addition, they also meet for nights out, picnics, museum visits, bike trips and dinners. All news about their activities are posted and shared through the Companions Google group (<http://groups.google.com/group/companions-lyngby>) and the associated mailing list. You are welcome to visit the group, and if you are interested in joining the mailing list, please contact the Chairman Martin Sebastian Lassen at email: [martins.lassen@gmail.com](mailto:martins.lassen@gmail.com).

### **Ministry Group**

A large group of helpers, Liturgy and Communion ministers help out during the English Mass. The ministries include the welcome address and final announcements, 1<sup>st</sup> reading, responsorial psalm, 2<sup>nd</sup> reading and gospel acclamation, prayer of the faithful (also called bidding prayers or prayers of petition), organising the collection, and administering communion.

Helping out during Mass is a very honourable ministry, and although we are all unworthy of these ministries, we can perform them with a humble attitude and with a great joy, because we have been given the grace to serve the Lord. If you are interested in helping out with any of these ministries, please contact the ministry coordinator, Susan Bjerregaard Nielsen at phone: 23 88 43 46 or email: [susan.bjerregaard.nielsen@gmail.com](mailto:susan.bjerregaard.nielsen@gmail.com).

### **Feel at home and get involved**

Whether you are living here permanently or just for a temporary period of time, we at St. Knud Lavard Church are very keen to help you feel at home and we want to hear your voice, but we need to know that you are here. One way to let us know that you are here, is to fill in a registration form (to be found at the back of the church) with your contact details. This is free of charge and you will not be asked to pay any fees. Your contact details will be kept confidential, will only be used to keep a record of your presence as a

member of the church and can be used in the future to inform you of activities happening in the church. It will not be distributed to any third party and will not be used for any commercial purposes.

If you have any questions or comments for the Parish Council, or if you have a great idea for a new activity you would like to see organised within this Christian setting, you are always welcome to contact the Parish Council Representative for the English Speaking Congregation, Susan Bjerregaard Nielsen at phone: 23 88 43 46 or email: [susan.bjerregaard.nielsen@gmail.com](mailto:susan.bjerregaard.nielsen@gmail.com).

## **The anointing of the sick**

*By John-Erik Stig Hansen*

“Any one of you who is ill should send for the elders of the church, and they must anoint the sick person with oil in the name of the Lord and pray over him. The prayer of faith will save the sick person and the Lord will raise him up again, and if he has committed any sins, he will be forgiven” (James 5: 14-15).

Ever since the oldest Christian congregations in the Church, there was a ritual to strengthen anyone who is seriously ill. In the 1300s the formulation of our current seven Sacraments were completed, and the anointing of the sick was counted as the seventh and last of the Sacraments. During the Middle Ages there was a growing trend to associate the Sacrament with something, which belonged to the dying, and the anointing of the sick was therefore a term used mainly when death was imminent. It was even termed “the last rites”.

In recent centuries, however, the view and practices have changed back towards the original concept. The anointing of the sick should be used for any baptised person affected by serious illness, which exposes him or her to excessive strain. Here, the Sacrament can act to strengthen the patient’s trust in God and strengthen his ability to bear suffering and fear of death. When the Sacrament is received, as it is intended, it also lift’s the patient's burden of guilt, and in some cases it has been reported that the patient has recovered after receiving the Sacrament. The anointing of the sick is therefore not a Sacrament for the dying – rather, the Eucharist is the proper Sacrament for strengthening a person’s journey into death and towards resurrection.

The anointing of the sick is traditionally performed by a priest lubricating oil, which is consecrated by a bishop for the purpose of being the seventh Sacrament’s external sign, on the person's forehead and praying with him or her. In addition to the Sacrament, which can be repeated in case of renewed disease, the person will often also receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Sacrament of Communion. Previously the person's eyes, nose, ears, hands and feet were also anointed, but this is not normally used anymore. The Sacrament can only be received by a baptised person, who is - or at least has been – at his full senses based on the perception that only such people can be struck by the existential fear and anxiety that may be associated with severe disease.

Thus, the anointing of the sick has from the very earliest times been part of Church practice. Even though it is only mentioned explicitly by James in the New Testament, many of the healing miracles performed by

Christ contain parallels to our seventh Sacrament. Even when hit by severe disease, physically weak and afraid of what will happen and how one is going to cope with the disease, the Church have an ancient ritual, which conveys the healing mercy of God to us.

### **On the 25<sup>th</sup> of January 2016, the OMI Congregation celebrated 200 years anniversary**

January 25<sup>th</sup> 2016 was the day of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of the Oblate fathers and brothers. It was celebrated in Aix-en-Provence in the southeast of France, where the young and zealous priest, Eugenius de Mazenod together with six other like-minded priests gave the three evangelical promises of poverty, chastity and obedience on this January day in 1816. Thereby, a new order of the Church was formed.

The three letters are an abbreviation in English for the "Oblates of Mary Immaculate". The name sounds nice in English, but unfortunately it can not easily be translated to Danish. The best translation found was "Oblatfærdrenes- og brødrenes ordenssamfund"; a name which scoured the sensitive Danish ears of Peter Schindler, but even he could not think of a better translation. In English, the word "oblate" comes from the Latin word "oblatus" which means "offering". Immaculate, or "immaculatus" in Latin, means "spotlessly conceived". Oblate priests and brothers are therefore the Immaculate Virgin Mary's offering to God. Through this name, one might sense the spirituality and charisma of this order.

The spirituality and charisma of an order, is grounded in the Holy Spirit's inspiration, which its founder was gifted with. Eugenius de Mazenod was born in 1782 in Aix-en-Provence, the son of a nobleman and a Bourgeoise mother. After his time as fugitive as a child because of the French Revolution, he returned to Aix as a young man in 1802 with only aim in mind; to live life to the full as a nobleman. But the dream was shattered in his mind and was replaced by a growing awareness of the social and moral destruction caused by the revolution.

He experienced a deep conversion on Good Friday in 1807 in St. Madeleine's Church in Aix, and shortly after he decided to become a priest. This was fulfilled on December 21<sup>st</sup> 1811 in Paris. His dream was to be a servant of the poor and a priest. Therefore, when he returned to Aix, he declined the opportunity to come to office. Instead, he immediately engaged with the impoverished youth, the prisoners in Aix' inhumane prison, farm workers, maids and the sick people, whom the established Church did not take care of. He did it in his own priestly style, which broke with all the neat conventions, e.g. he preached in Provençal (and not proper French) which the poor could understand. Overwhelmed by the poverty and distress he encountered, and the demands and opportunities, which this service among the poor presented, he quickly became aware that he needed some like-minded and zealous priests. It happened through "an impulse from the outside" that Eugene together with six other priests, tied each other into a pious community, in an old and dilapidated Carmelite Monastery in Aix on January 25<sup>th</sup> 1816, later to be called The Missionaries of Provence. They had to live together as brothers and mimic Jesus Christ - above all by preaching the Word of God to the poor. Their hearts would embrace the whole world. 10 years later, Pope Leo XII formally approved this little congregation under the name: Oblates of Mary Immaculate.

The spirit and the values which Eugenius de Mazenod built his own life upon and passed on to his sons, describing the spirituality and charisma of the OMI's, is best expressed in the preface of the rule, he wrote for the congregation in 1818: "They are convinced that if priests could be formed, burning with zeal for the salvation of men, priests, who do not have their own interests at heart, firmly grounded in virtue - simply put, apostolic men who are completely conscious of the need for their own repentance, who would work with all of the resources available to them, in order to convert others."

Eugene de Mazenod became Bishop of Marseille in 1837, but remained head of his small but growing congregation until his death on May 21<sup>st</sup> 1861. His last words to his brothers were: "Among you love, love, love and outside zealously for the salvation of souls".

Already by his death, his small congregation of 416 members had spread to ten other countries including Canada, USA, Sri Lanka and South Africa. Today, there are over 3700 OMI's in over 60 countries across all continents of the world, engaged in various pastoral tasks. Pope Pius XI was so impressed by the courage of the OMIs, he called them the "Specialists in the difficult missions of the Church". In reality, the OMI's are only specialists in meeting the urgent needs of the Church.

OMI's are boldly looking to bring the gospel of Jesus Christ everywhere, where there is a need for it. They bring the love of God. It is this love, which forms the basis for their service of God's people, and at the same time underlines their conviction that: "Our mission asks us to be men who themselves have experienced God's love in our own life. Being men, driven by this love to risk our lives for the Gospel's sake."

Eugene de Mazenod was canonised by Pope John Paul II on December 3<sup>rd</sup> 1995. In his speech, the Pope said: "...That all the actions of St. Eugenius de Mazenods were inspired by the firm belief that to 'love the Church is to love Jesus Christ and vice versa.' His influence was not limited to his time. It continues into our time. His apostolate consisted of transforming the world through the power of the gospel. What St. Eugenius wanted to achieve, was that through Christ any man could become a complete and authentic Christian, a credible saint... The Church gives us this great Bishop and founder of the OMI Congregation as an example of heroic faith, hope and love."

The Anniversary was marked in Herlev by a pontifical high mass celebrated by Bishop Czeslaw Kozon followed by a reception and presentations by Paul Marx and Theraraj Frederic.

***Fr Paul Marx, omi***

## **What happens in the school**

The sun is shining and the school yard is buzzing from play - skipping ropes, ball games and sand castles. It is SUMMER. The new small pupils, who started at the school in May, and who just a month ago, was standing small and perplexed, when the kindergarten class and the 5<sup>th</sup> graders greeted them welcome, already feel at home and part of the daily school life. Twenty-two small new preschool children started school at St. Knud Lavard.

The 9<sup>th</sup> graders had their last day of school in late May entailing a water fight, throwing the toffees and the revue. A lovely and festive day for all, but also sad because it was a farewell to eighteen lovely young

people, who are now ending their schooling here at St Knud Lavard School. They are already working on their final exams, and both teachers and pupils are pleased and proud of the super fine results this year, both at the written tests and the oral exams - which are now in full swing.

This year, the media has been focusing a lot on the last day of school for the 9<sup>th</sup> graders and we are happy to report, that we always experience this day as a positive and festive day with fun features and a good atmosphere, so the whole day becomes a good memory as they move on. The end of elementary school should preferably show that we in every way have succeeded in developing the life attitude, which is so important for our school.

In just three weeks, the pupils start their summer holiday and another school year is completed, but until then there is still fifteen good days of teaching – where the pupils will finish practicing their features for the graduation, so all are contributing to a splendid graduation night. On Friday June 24<sup>th</sup> we conclude the school year in the Church at 12:00 noon, where the pupils are sent on holiday with a blessing by Fr. Alren.

During the summer holidays, the fire access road will be subjected to excavation work to prepare for district heating to be installed in late July. Further to this, the main building needs a new roof. Therefore, as soon as the excavation work is completed, scaffolding will be erected on the fire access road. The new roof project is set to last three months. During this period, the fire access road and a great part of the school yard will be reserved for building equipment and security areas. Therefore, we are very grateful to be allowed to organise the bike parking at the church square and be allowed to use the church garden, as long as work is in progress.

Keep up to date with what happens at the school at our website or on our facebook page. Here are lovely photos from our pupil excursions, education, Lenten collection, pilgrimage to Åsebakken - and many of the other events, which have happened during this past school year.

With the desire for a happy and blessed summer to you all,

***Christa Bonde***

[www.sanktknudlavardskole.dk](http://www.sanktknudlavardskole.dk)

## **Marriage according to the second Vatican Council**

As was the case with so many other theological and pastoral questions, the Catholic Church's view on marriage was significantly modified at the Second Vatican Council. Contrary to earlier official statements and conventional theological and canonical perceptions, the Second Vatican Council takes a remarkable "personalistic" view. Firstly, it no longer uses the term "contract" to describe the marriage bond. Instead, the Second Vatican Council speaks about marriage as a 'covenant' that is sealed by an 'irreversible personal consent'.

Secondly, the Second Vatican Council no longer makes the distinction between primary and secondary aims of marriage, where the procreation of children were always more important than the spouses' mutual love. "Without ignoring other purposes of marriage, the right view is that the mutual love of the spouses and the

whole family life will stimulate spouses to cooperate with the Creator and Saviour's love, He, who through the parents still expands and enriches His family".

Thirdly, the marital Sacrament is not an addition to the marital unit, which is based on mutual human love. "A true love between spouses is adopted into God's love. It is guided and used through the saving power of Christ in the work of the Church...". This new emphasis in marriage theology is consistent with our contemporary sociological claim, that this is the first time where people marry and remain in their marriage, because they love each other. Therefore, there is this emphasis on the mutual exchange of love as the basis for the Sacrament of marriage; of the marital love as a source of the institution of marriage, of the necessity of this love's growth in order to bring the Sacrament to full completion, and by the fact that it is necessary, that the Church continually witnesses to the entire faith community the value of this Sacrament. Just as the spouses are called to be faithful, generous and kind to each other in fulfilment of their marital oath, the whole Church is called to be faithful to His covenant with God in Christ. "When Christian marriage falters," John T. Finnegan, the former president of the Canon Law Society of America, writes, "the testimony of all Christian vocation is faltering".

Fourthly, the Council stresses the necessity of faith as part of the marital Sacrament. It is no longer enough that both parties are baptized. Marriage is not just a ceremony, wherein two people are bound together under the law. As a Sacrament, it is a service, an act of faith, a sign of unity of the Church, a form of Christ's presence. The Second Vatican Council goes beyond canon law, which says that a valid marriage in itself is a Sacrament. Vatican II uses the term "Christifideles". Marriage is not only a unity between baptised Christians; it is a unity between faithfully practicing Christians.

Fifthly, the consummation of marriage is more than just a biological act. The old theology and the old canonical court claimed, that a marriage between two baptised Christians, when it is created according to Church ritual (Ratum), and when it is consummated by a single act of bodily association (consummatum), can never be dissolved, not even by the Pope.

However, according to the Second Vatican Council, the term mutual love, which is the core of the Sacrament, is comprised of more than just a biological union. "Because it consists of a personal event between an I and a you, it also includes the whole person; it is able to add both to its bodily and its spiritual expressions an intrinsic value and quality by making them components of, and adequate evidence of, spouses' mutual tenderness... It permeates their lives." Consummation without love is meaningless. It would be difficult in light of the teaching of the Second Vatican Council to see how such only biological consummation may have a sacramental character. Instead, the Vatican II speaks of "the intimate life in communion of love". Finally, the wider ecclesiastical dimension of the Sacrament is maintained, "the Sacrament makes them a symbol of, and participants in, the fertile love, which exists between Christ and the Church."

The Catholic Church teaches that marriage is monogamous (one husband, one wife at the same time) and insoluble (permanent). On the other hand, the Church has in its pastoral practice tolerated limited forms of ecclesiastical adaptation for years, where a strict adherence to the full requirements of the Christian law would require moral heroism. Origenes (+ 254) suggested a formula, which was frequently cited during the first thousand years of Church history: "The situation of divorce and remarriage is in contrast to the taught, but not quite unfounded. "It was a kind of 'the lesser evil' principle. The Eastern Orthodox Churches

developed and still maintain the principle of economy (equal to the Catholic notion of dispense), wherein the unintended hardness of a given law is removed. Thus, the Orthodox churches have allowed remarriage after a divorce. "Because the resurrected Christ has entrusted the Church to manage the law with wisdom and freedom and by listening to the reminders of the Holy Spirit of today's problems on the unity of the Church, including a proper understanding of the economy, that a spiritual judgment is exerted" ("Unity and Divine Economy", *Origins* 6/9, August 12<sup>th</sup> 1976).

The "Tridentine council's" teaching about the insolubility of marriage (XXIV. Session, canon 7, 1563) was designed against the Reformers, not against the Orthodox. While the Catholic Church's position is clear - i.e., that marriage is permanent - it does not exclude the kind of pastoral flexibility, which is contained in the economy principle.

From: Richard P. McBrien, "Catholic faith through two millennia, Niels Steensens Forlag, 1987.