

Parish of Our Lady of the Annunciation - King's Lynn

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Holy Family Church
Field Lane, Gaywood,
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Tuesday, 26th May 2020.

With apologies - technical hitch with attachments this morning.

On Tuesday, 26 May 2020, 06:45:34 BST, Shaun H J Morrison <shaunmorrison1975@btinternet.com> wrote:

Dear Friends,

I hope you are well.

Today we keep the memorial of St. Philip Neri, Priest.

From <https://universalis.com/europe.english.eastanglia/20200526/today.htm>

Saint Philip Neri (1515 - 1595)

He was born in Florence in 1515. At the age of eighteen he went to Rome, and earned his living as a tutor. He undertook much-needed charitable work among the young men of the city, and started a brotherhood to help the sick poor and pilgrims.

He was advised that he could do more good as a priest, and was ordained in 1551. He built an oratory over the church of San Girolamo, where he invented services, consisting of spiritual readings and hymns, which were the origin of the oratorio (tradition is a good thing; but innovation also has its place). He continued to serve the young men of Rome, rich and poor alike, with religious discussions and by organising charitable enterprises. He had a particular care for the young students at the English College in Rome, studying for a missionary life and probable martyrdom in England.

He inspired other clergy to emulate him, and formed them into the Congregation of the Oratory. Oratorian foundations still flourish in many countries today. He died in Rome in 1595.

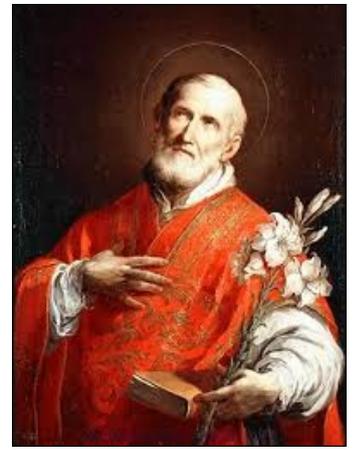
St Philip Neri was an enemy of solemnity and conventionality. When some of his more pompous penitents made their confession to him (he was famous as a confessor) he imposed salutary and deflating penances on them, such as walking through the streets of Rome carrying his cat (he was very fond of cats). When a novice showed signs of excessive seriousness, Philip stood on his head in front of him, to make him laugh. When people looked up to him too much, he did something ridiculous so that they should not respect someone who was no wiser – and no less sinful – than they were. In every case there was an excellent point to his pranks: to combat pride, or melancholy, or hero-worship.

Laughter is not much heard in churches: perhaps that is to be expected... but outside church, Christians should laugh more than anyone else – laugh from sheer joy, that God bothered to make us, and that he continues to love us despite the idiots we are. Everyone is a sinner, but Christians are sinners *redeemed* – an undeserved rescue that we make even less deserved by everything we do. It is too serious a matter to be serious about: all we can reasonably do is rejoice.

Very many of the saints, not just St Philip, have an abiding terror of being looked up to. For they know their imperfections better than anyone else, and being revered by other people is doubly bad. It is bad for the others, who should be revering God instead, and for themselves,

because they might be tempted to believe their own image and believe themselves to be worthy.

We are not saints yet, but we, too, should beware. Uprightness and virtue do have their rewards, in self-respect and in respect from others, and it is easy to find ourselves aiming for the result rather than the cause. Let us aim for joy, rather than respectability. Let us make fools of ourselves from time to time, and thus see ourselves, for a moment, as the all-wise God sees us.



Attached for you are the Mass readings for today.

The readings for Tuesday 7th week of Easter are:

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles 20: 17-27

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John 17:1-11

(You will recognise that today's Gospel is the Gospel that we also heard on Sunday)

Reflection on today's Gospel from:

<https://www.sacredspace.ie/scripture/john-171-11>

Jesus speaks from the depths of his heart. He tells us of the Father's love for him and his love for his Father, who is the heart and core of his very being. The Father's love continues to be with him right to the end, even to the Cross, to the point of giving his all, his life.

"This is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent". All our life we struggle to know him, through words and parables, and through the world which he has entrusted to us. At no stage can we say that we understand God. Saint Augustine wrote: "Understanding is the reward of faith. Therefore do not seek to understand in order to believe, but believe that you may understand". My human mission is to seek God through every means, and to remain a God-seeker until the day when he reveals himself to me face to face.

It is day five for the Pentecost Novena. And the novena from the Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales can be listened to by clicking into the following link:

[Pentecost Novena - DAY FIVE by Catholic Church](#)

My love, thoughts and prayers,

God bless,

Shaun

Deacon Shaun Morrison
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Tuesday, 26th May 2020.

Daily Mass Readings Tuesday of the 7th Week of Eastertide

These are the readings for the feria

First reading - Acts 20:17-27

I have without faltering put before you the whole of God's purpose

From Miletus Paul sent for the elders of the church of Ephesus. When they arrived he addressed these words to them:

‘You know what my way of life has been ever since the first day I set foot among you in Asia, how I have served the Lord in all humility, with all the sorrows and trials that came to me through the plots of the Jews. I have not hesitated to do anything that would be helpful to you; I have preached to you, and instructed you both in public and in your homes, urging both Jews and Greeks to turn to God and to believe in our Lord Jesus.

‘And now you see me a prisoner already in spirit; I am on my way to Jerusalem, but have no idea what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit, in town after town, has made it clear enough that imprisonment and persecution await me. But life to me is not a thing to waste words on, provided that when I finish my race I have carried out the mission the Lord Jesus gave me – and that was to bear witness to the Good News of God’s grace.

‘I now feel sure that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom will ever see my face again. And so here and now I swear that my conscience is clear as far as all of you are concerned, for I have without faltering put before you the whole of God’s purpose.’

The Word of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm - Psalm 67(68):10-11, 20-21

Kingdoms of the earth, sing to God.

You poured down, O God, a generous rain:
when your people were starved you gave them new life.
It was there that your people found a home,
prepared in your goodness, O God, for the poor.

Kingdoms of the earth, sing to God.

May the Lord be blessed day after day.
He bears our burdens, God our saviour.
This God of ours is a God who saves.
The Lord our God holds the keys of death.

Kingdoms of the earth, sing to God.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia!

I will not leave you orphans, says the Lord;
I go, but I will come back to you,
and your hearts will be full of joy.
Alleluia!

Gospel - John 17:1-11

Father, it is time for you to glorify me

Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said:

‘Father, the hour has come:

glorify your Son

so that your Son may glorify you;

and, through the power over all mankind that you have given him,
let him give eternal life to all those you have entrusted to him.

And eternal life is this:

to know you,

the only true God,

and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

I have glorified you on earth

and finished the work that you gave me to do.

Now, Father, it is time for you to glorify me

with that glory I had with you

before ever the world was.

I have made your name known

to the men you took from the world to give me.

They were yours and you gave them to me,

and they have kept your word.

Now at last they know

that all you have given me comes indeed from you;

for I have given them the teaching you gave to me,

and they have truly accepted this, that I came from you,

and have believed that it was you who sent me.

I pray for them;

I am not praying for the world

but for those you have given me,

because they belong to you:

all I have is yours

and all you have is mine,

and in them I am glorified.

I am not in the world any longer,

but they are in the world,

and I am coming to you.’

The Gospel of the Lord.

Daily Mass Readings

The Feast Day of St. Philip Neri, Priest

These are the readings for the memorial

First reading - Philippians 4:4-9

If there is anything you need, pray for it.

I want you to be happy, always happy in the Lord; I repeat, what I want is your happiness. Let your tolerance be evident to everyone: the Lord is very near.

There is no need to worry; but if there is anything you need, pray for it, asking God for it with prayer and thanksgiving, and that peace of God, which is so much greater than we can understand, will guard your hearts and your thoughts, in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, fill your minds with everything that is true, everything that is noble, everything that is good and pure, everything that we love and honour, and everything that can be thought virtuous or worthy of praise. Keep doing all the things that you learnt from me and have been taught by me and have heard or seen that I do. Then the God of peace will be with you.

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm - 33(34):2-11

I will bless the Lord at all times.

I will bless the Lord at all times,
his praise always on my lips;
in the Lord my soul shall make its boast.
The humble shall hear and be glad.

I will bless the Lord at all times.

Glorify the Lord with me.
Together let us praise his name.
I sought the Lord and he answered me;
from all my terrors he set me free.

I will bless the Lord at all times.

Look towards him and be radiant;
let your faces not be abashed.
This poor man called, the Lord heard him
and rescued him from all his distress.

I will bless the Lord at all times.

The angel of the Lord is encamped
around those who revere him, to rescue them.
Taste and see that the Lord is good.
He is happy who seeks refuge in him.

I will bless the Lord at all times.

Revere the Lord, you his saints.
They lack nothing, those who revere him.
Strong lions suffer want and go hungry
but those who seek the Lord lack no blessing.

I will bless the Lord at all times.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia!

Remain in my love, says the Lord;
whoever remains in me, with me in him,
bears fruit in plenty.

Alleluia!

Gospel - John 17:20-26

Father, may they be completely one

Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said:

‘Holy Father,

I pray not only for these,

but for those also

who through their words will believe in me.

May they all be one.

Father, may they be one in us,

as you are in me and I am in you,

so that the world may believe it was you who sent me.

I have given them the glory you gave to me,

that they may be one as we are one.

With me in them and you in me,

may they be so completely one

that the world will realise that it was you who sent me

and that I have loved them as much as you loved me.

Father, I want those you have given me

to be with me where I am,

so that they may always see the glory you have given me

because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

Father, Righteous One,

the world has not known you,

but I have known you,

and these have known that you have sent me.

I have made your name known to them

and will continue to make it known,

so that the love with which you loved me may be in them,

and so that I may be in them.’

The Gospel of the Lord.

St Philip Neri

Philip Romolo Neri (Italian: **Filippo Romolo Neri**; 21 July 1515 – 26 May 1595), known as the *Second Apostle of Rome*, after Saint Peter, was an Italian priest noted for founding a society of secular clergy called the Congregation of the Oratory.

Early life

Philip was the son of Francesco di Neri, a lawyer, and his wife Lucrezia da Mosciano, whose family were nobility in the service of the state. He was carefully brought up, and received his early teaching from the friars at San Marco, the famous Dominican monastery in Florence. He was accustomed in later life to ascribe most of his progress to the teaching of two of them, Zenobio de' Medici and Servanzio Mini. At the age of 18, Philip was sent to his uncle, Romolo, a wealthy merchant at



Philip Neri

San Germano (now Cassino), a then Neapolitan town near the base of Monte Cassino, to assist him in his business, and with the hope that he might inherit his uncle's fortune. He gained Romolo's confidence and affection, but soon after coming to San Germano Philip had a religious conversion. From then onward, he no longer cared for things of the world, and decided in 1533 to live in Rome.

Founding of the Oratory

Mission work

After arriving in Rome, Philip became a tutor in the house of a Florentine aristocrat named Galeotto Caccia. After two years he began to pursue his own studies (for a period of three years) under the guidance of the Augustinians. Following this, he began those labours amongst the sick and poor which, in later life, gained him the title of "Apostle of Rome". He also ministered to the prostitutes of the city. In 1538 he entered into the home mission work for which he became famous, traveling throughout the city, seeking opportunities of entering into conversation with people, and of leading them to consider the topics he set before them. For seventeen years Philip lived as a layman in Rome, probably without thinking of becoming a priest. Around 1544, he made the acquaintance of Ignatius of Loyola. Many of Philip's disciples found their vocations in the infant Society of Jesus.

Confraternity of the Holy Trinity

In 1548, together with his confessor, Persiano Rossa, Philip founded the Confraternity of the Most Holy Trinity of Pilgrims and Convalescents (Italian: *Santissima Trinita de' Pellegrini e de' Convalescenti*), whose primary object was to minister to the needs of the thousands of poor pilgrims who flocked to Rome, especially in jubilee years, and also to relieve the patients

discharged from hospitals but who were still too weak for labour. Members met for prayer at the Church of San Salvatore in Campo where the devotion of the Forty Hours of Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament was first introduced into Rome.

The Oratory

In 1551 Philip received all the minor orders, and was ordained deacon and finally priest (on 23 May). He thought of going to India as a missionary, but was dissuaded by his friends who saw that there was abundant work to be done in Rome. Accordingly, he settled down, with some companions, at the Hospital of San Girolamo della Carità, and while there tentatively began, in 1556, the institute with which his name is more especially connected, that of the Oratory. The scheme at first was no more than a series of evening meetings in a hall (the Oratory), at which there were prayers, hymns, and readings from Scripture, the church fathers, and the Martyrology, followed by a lecture or by discussion of some religious question proposed for consideration. The musical selections (settings of scenes from sacred history) were called *oratorios*. Giovanni Palestrina was one of Philip's followers, and composed music for the services. The program developed, and the members of the society undertook various kinds of mission work throughout Rome, notably the preaching of sermons in different churches every evening, a completely new idea at that time. He also spent much of his time hearing confessions, and effected many conversions in this way.

Philip sometimes led "excursions" to other churches, often with music and a picnic on the way. In 1553, Neri started the tradition of making a one-day pilgrimage to seven churches, starting from St. Peter's Basilica and ending at the Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore. He and a few friends would gather before dawn and set out on their "Seven Churches Walk". The street which links Basilica of Saint Paul Outside the Walls with San Sebastiano fuori le mura is still called "Via delle Sette Chiese" (Seven Churches Walk). These pilgrimages were designed to be a counterpoint to the raucous behaviour of Carnival. The Walks became very popular and began to attract others.

In 1564 the Florentines requested that Philip leave San Girolamo to oversee their newly built church in Rome, San Giovanni dei Fiorentini. He was at first reluctant, but by consent of Pope Pius IV he accepted, while remaining in charge of San Girolamo where the exercises of the Oratory were kept up. At this time the new society included among its members Caesar Baronius (the ecclesiastical historian), Francesco Maria Tarugi (afterwards Archbishop of Avignon), and Ottavio Paravicini -- all of whom later became cardinals -- and also Gallonius (Antonio Gallonio, author of a well-known work on the *Sufferings of the Martyrs*), Ancina, Bordoni, and other men of ability and distinction. In 1574, the Florentines built a large oratory or mission-room for the society, next to San Giovanni - in order to save them the fatigue of the daily journey to and from San Girolamo, and to provide a more convenient place of assembly -- and the headquarters were transferred there.

As the community grew, and its mission work extended, the need for a church entirely its own made itself felt, and the small parish church of Santa Maria in Vallicella, conveniently situated in the middle of Rome, was offered and accepted. The building, however, not large enough for their purpose, was pulled down, and a splendid church erected on the site. It was immediately after taking possession of their new quarters that Philip formally organized, under permission

of a papal bull dated 15 July 1575, a community of secular priests, called the Congregation of the Oratory. The new church was consecrated early in 1577, and the clergy of the new society at once resigned the charge of San Giovanni dei Fiorentini; Philip himself did not leave San Girolamo until 1583, and then only by virtue of an injunction of the pope that he, as the superior, should reside at the chief house of his congregation. He was at first elected for a term of three years (as was common in modern societies) but in 1587 was nominated superior for life. He was, however, entirely free from personal ambition, and had no desire to be superior general over a number of dependent houses, so he desired that all congregations formed on his model outside Rome should be autonomous, governing themselves, and with no provision for Philip to retain control over any new foundation they might themselves make elsewhere – a regulation afterwards formally confirmed by a brief of Gregory XV in 1622.

Political activity

Although Philip refrained from becoming involved in political matters, he broke this rule in 1593–1595 when he persuaded Pope Clement VIII to revoke the excommunication and anathema pronounced against Henry IV of France and the refusal to receive his ambassador, even though the king had formally renounced Calvinism. Philip saw that the pope's attitude was more than likely to drive Henry to a relapse and to rekindle the civil war in France, and directed the future Cardinal Caesar Baronius, a member of the Oratory who was then the pope's confessor, to refuse the pope absolution and to resign his office of confessor unless the pope withdrew the anathema. Clement yielded at once, though the whole college of cardinals had supported his policy; and Henry, who did not learn the facts until several years afterwards, testified lively gratitude for the timely and politic intervention. Philip continued in the government of the Oratory until his death. He was succeeded by Baronius.

Personal character

Philip Neri embodied a number of contradictions, combining popular veneration with intensely individual piety. He became deeply involved with the Church hierarchy while seeking to reform a corrupt Rome and an indifferent clergy.

Philip possessed a playful sense of humour, combined with a shrewd wit. He considered a cheerful temper to be more Christian than a melancholy one, and carried this spirit into his whole life: "A joyful heart is more easily made perfect than a downcast one." This was the secret of Neri's popularity and of his place in the folklore of the Roman poor. Many miracles were attributed to him. When his body was examined after death, it was found that two of his ribs had been broken, which was attributed at the time to the expansion of his heart while fervently praying in the catacombs about the year 1545. Benedict XIV, who reorganised the rules for canonization, decided that Philip's enlarged heart was caused by an aneurism. Ponnelle and Bordet, in their 1932 biography *St. Philip Neri and the Roman Society of His Times (1515–1595)*, conclude that it was partly natural and partly supernatural. What is certain is that Philip himself and his penitents associated it with divine love.

"Practical commonplaceness," says Frederick William Faber in his panegyric on Philip, "was the special mark which distinguishes his form of ascetic piety from the types accredited before his day. He looked like other men. ...He was emphatically a modern gentleman, of scrupulous

courtesy, sportive gaiety, acquainted with what was going on in the world, taking a real interest in it, giving and getting information, very neatly dressed, with a shrewd common sense always alive about him, in a modern room with modern furniture, plain, it is true, but with no marks of poverty about it – in a word, with all the ease, the gracefulness, the polish of a modern gentleman of good birth, considerable accomplishments, and widespread knowledge."

Accordingly, Philip was ready to meet the needs of his day to an extent and in a manner which even the versatile Jesuits, who much desired to enlist him in their company, did not rival; and, though an Italian priest and head of a new religious order, his genius was entirely un-monastic and un-medieval – frequent and popular preaching, unconventional prayer, and unsystematized, albeit fervent, private devotion.

Philip prayed, "Let me get through today, and I shall not fear tomorrow."

Philip had no difficulties in respect of the teaching of his Church. His great merit was the instinctive tact which showed him that the system of monasticism could never be the leaven of secular life in the world of his day, but that something more homely, simple, and everyday in character was needed for the new times then emerging.

Death and veneration

Philip Neri died around the end of the day on 25 May 1595, the Feast of Corpus Christi that year, after having spent the day hearing confessions and receiving visitors. About midnight he began haemorrhaging, and Baronius read the commendatory prayers over him. Baronius asked that he bless his spiritual sons before dying, and though he could no longer speak, he blessed them with the sign of the cross and died.

Philip Neri was beatified by Paul V in 1615 and canonized by Pope Gregory XV in 1622.

His memorial is celebrated on 26 May. His body is venerated in the Chiesa Nuova ("New Church") in Rome.

Philip Neri is one of the influential figures of the Counter-Reformation, and noted for converting to personal holiness many of the influential people within the Church itself.



Philip Neri's effigy at his tomb
