



**Deacon
Shaun Morrison's
Bulletin**

THE CATHOLIC PARISH OF KING'S LYNN

The Church of Our Lady of the Annunciation

London Road, King's Lynn, Norfolk. PE30 5HQ.

and

Holy Family Church

Field Lane, Gaywood, King's Lynn, Norfolk. PE30 1AY

Monday, February 15, 2021

Good morning,

Wishing you a good Monday.

I wanted to share a couple of things with you that I thought you may be interested in reading.

One article is the Obituary of Mgr Mark Anthony Edmund Langham and the second article is the homily given at the Mass in honour of Our Lady of Lourdes on the World Day for the Sick at Westminster Cathedral on 13th February 2021.

The Obituary of Mgr Mark

When the sad news of the death of Mgr Mark Anthony Edmund Langham was received at Archbishop's House on the morning of 15th January the Archbishop's Council was meeting by Zoom. Cardinal Vincent immediately paused the meeting to offer prayers for the repose of the soul of Mgr Mark that, through the mercy of God, he may rest in peace. News of Mgr Mark's death shocked many, it was not widely known that he had been living with cancer for twelve years. He did not want to draw attention to himself, cause people to worry and he certainly did not want any fuss. He bore his illness with courage, determined to carry on his ministry at Cambridge University Catholic Chaplaincy for as long as possible. When he knew his remaining time was very limited he prepared family, friends and colleagues for what he knew would shock many. He asked for prayers for himself and for those caring for him. On 2 January he sent out a message saying 'Over the Christmas season the cancer has returned in a form resistant to chemotherapy, and I have been told to prepare for the end...I have had a wonderful and varied ministry and priesthood, and undertaken extraordinary tasks, but none has thrilled me and delighted me like the chaplaincy at Fisher House. The opportunity to encounter and influence the finest young people, to be fired by your enthusiasm and holiness, and to build the wider community, has given me great hope for the future of the Church and of our society. Thank you for this wonderful experience.'

Mgr Mark's life could, perhaps, be split into nine chapters: the growing up years in west London, the student years in Cambridge, the seminary years in London and Rome, then Westminster Cathedral, the Bayswater years, back to the Cathedral, back to Rome, back to Cambridge and, finally, back to London. London, Cambridge and Rome were the great cities that Mark made his home and they found a home in Mark's heart. Much could be written about each of these chapters!

Mark Langham was born in London on 28th November 1960. He grew up in Whitton with his parents Bernard and Maureen and two sisters, Maura and Eilish, and Gladstone the dog. He was educated at the Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School in Kensington, where his name is shown on boards in the new hall listing former students who went on to be ordained. He went

from there to Magdalene College, Cambridge to study Classics, changing after two years to study History, from 1979 to 1983. As an undergraduate in Cambridge Mark attended to his faith by spending time with the Lord in Magdalene College chapel, praying, and with students and staff of different Christian churches, singing. As a member of the choir he formed lasting friendships. Mark became involved with the Catholic chaplaincy at Fisher House. Essentially shy, he developed a social life that helped him to grow in confidence as he recognized and nurtured his gifts, intellectually, socially and spiritually. He appreciated beauty in its various manifestations. Mark became a familiar and popular figure at Cambridge, dressed in the standard student uniform of tweedy jacket, heavy corduroy trousers and polished brogues. He was good company, being cheerful and humorous. Although not an intellectual high flyer or original thinker he was prepared to work hard to succeed. He was awarded Master of Arts in 1983.

After university Mark worked for a year in the housing benefits office of the London Borough of Hounslow. It was during this time that he was accepted as a student for the priesthood and in 1984 he went to Allen Hall, the diocesan seminary in Chelsea. After two years his priestly formation took him to Rome, to the Venerable English College, until his return to his home parish of St Edmund of Canterbury, Whitton for ordination to the priesthood by Cardinal Basil Hume on 16th September 1990.

Fr Mark's first appointment was to Westminster Cathedral where he served as a Chaplain from 1990 to 1992 before being appointed Precentor in 1993. The following year he was appointed Sub-Administrator, until 1996. Fr Mark then left the cathedral to take up his next appointment as Assistant Priest at Bayswater. After a year he was appointed Parish Priest. He faced many challenges as successor to Fr Michael Hollings, but he was able to make the presbytery a home for the priests of the parish and a place of welcome for family and friends.

In 2001 Fr Mark left Bayswater and returned to the cathedral, this time as Administrator and remained in this post until 2008. It was during this time, in August 2002, that Fr Mark was appointed Chaplain to His Holiness with the title Monsignor. Mgr Mark was very conscious that the Cathedral served its own parish as well as the whole diocese and also the Church in England and Wales. He met and got to know the great and the good, and the not so good. He said that, above all, Westminster Cathedral is a house of God, a place where prayer comes naturally. He made Clergy House more comfortable for the Chaplains and their guests, and ensured that the roof terrace was fit for purpose: plants and parties! He was a regular contributor to the Catholic Teachers Certificate programme run at Vaughan House adjacent to the Cathedral. Teachers and catechists benefitted from his succinct and engaging presentations. While at the Cathedral Mgr Mark worked closely with the Chaplains, staff, volunteers and parishioners. He valued everyone and was respectful of people. He oversaw the installation of several mosaics, and the accessible steps by the West doors, the fruit of patient working with various interested parties. He engaged with colleagues at Westminster Abbey and St Paul's Cathedral, and cathedral choirs visited each other's churches and participated in Vespers and Evensong during the week of prayer for Christian unity. The three choirs of the three Cathedrals went to Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris when the great organ was restored.

Mgr Mark's next appointment took him back to Rome to work at the Vatican from 2008 to 2013. He was appointed to the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, working as secretary to the Anglican and Methodist dialogues. He understood the culture and theology of various Christians traditions and strongly believed in the symphonic nature of the Church

wherein the gifts of other churches and communities are given and received. A very traditional English Catholic (and with an Irish Catholic mother), Mgr Mark's book on ARCIC and the Caroline Divines (theologians who lived during the reigns of the two Kings Charles) reveals a careful appreciation of the Anglican tradition. He told few of his friends that he was working on the doctorate which was the book's genesis. It shows the analytical mind of a scholar at ease in two fields, the Divines and ARCIC, which he genuinely knew and loved deeply.

On his return from Rome to take up his appointment in Cambridge as Chaplain in 2013, living at and working from Fisher House on Guildhall Street, those who knew him from his student years now encountered Mgr Mark as a man who had blossomed into a gifted and charismatic priest. His eight years as Chaplain were characterised by stylish personal flair and what has been described as 'exceptionally warm and genial pastoral wisdom'. He was good at remembering names and birthdays, and he was ever-ready to celebrate. His enthusiasm for his life-giving Catholic faith was something he wished to impart to others. Having benefitted from his chaplaincy experience as a student he wanted the students to similarly benefit from what he and the chaplaincy had to offer. He compiled lists of ten Catholic books, films and buildings which must be read or seen before a Catholic student left Cambridge. He invited distinguished speakers and preachers to give talks and homilies to the students. He wrote, directed and featured in chaplaincy pantomimes. His love of acting came to expression as an uninhibited panto dame! He celebrated the gifts of others, and organized exhibitions of the work of student painters and photographers, making his own contributions including a glowing Mediterranean landscape backdrop to the chaplaincy crib that featured Cambridge landmarks. Mgr Mark had appreciation for aesthetics. Also memorable are the annual Eurovision song contest parties during the televised show, with participants cheering and applauding the range of offerings from our international friends and adversaries. He led pilgrimages, including to Rome where he was given access to people and places others would be denied. Mgr Mark loved the Church and the priesthood. He celebrated Mass at Fisher House in a way that included the participation of all in their proper way. His homilies, imaginative and engaging, gave encouragement and hope to students and staff, as did the social life of the chaplaincy. His long standing commitment to, and distinguished service of, ecumenism was a significant asset in his ministry at Cambridge, being rooted in an utterly robust sense of his own Catholic identity, nurtured in his family and home, his experience at school, as an undergraduate and as a priest in pastoral and ecumenical apostolates.

Mgr Mark lived with illness for many years, and kept this to himself apart from a few of his closest confidants. Despite his illness he lived cheerfully and courageously, always grateful for the life he had been given, the opportunities it presented and the people who were part of his life. Also part of his life, in the latter months, was Audrey, the affectionate Basset Hound that gave him much pleasure. Mgr Mark expressed regret that he did not have sufficient longevity to get to know her better. He was grateful for the treatment he received at Addenbrookes Hospital but was determined to come home, to London. On 6th January 2021 he returned to London for the last time to receive end of life care at the Hospice of Ss John and Elizabeth.

Mgr Mark died peacefully on 15th January 2021. In his farewell message he gave thanks for the wonderful experience of priesthood and ministry that was his. Many people in their turn give thanks for their wonderful experience of the Church through Mgr Mark's joyful and generous living of his faith and priesthood. He would surely not object to Dante Alighieri, the Italian poet whose works he loved, being quoted in this obituary. In the last line of the long

poem in which Dante is faced with the vision of God himself, in the Divine Comedy, God is not merely a blinding vision of glorious light, but is, above all, the love that moves the sun and the other stars, *l'amor che move il sole e l'altre stelle*.

May the soul of this faithful priest who brought light and love to many rest in peace.

<https://rcdow.org.uk/news/mgr-mark-anthony-edmund-langham-rip/>

The homily in honour of Our Lady of Lourdes (13th Feb 2021)

On Thursday, the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, live pictures were streamed from her Shrine. We were able to be with people gathered at the Grotto, quietly moving around, praying peacefully. We were able to take part in the grand celebration of Mass in the Underground Basilica, filled with people and the singing of the choir. These moments brought comfort and encouragement to many who love the Shrine and look forward to being able to go there again in the future.

This afternoon we gather, as best we can, to express our devotion to Our Blessed Lady and to ask her to stream to us not images of Lourdes but her gifts of compassion and hope.

The Gospel reminds us that we are right to do so. The Wedding Feast in the village of Cana gives us real insight into the relationship between the Mother and her divine Son. As only a mother can, she knows his heart. She understands his deepest longing to redeem his people, in whatever their need. And she is utterly confident that he will answer her requests, maybe above all others. And so it is.

We, then, are right to bring our needs to her, asking her to intercede for us with her Son. Indeed, as at Cana, she already knows the longings of our hearts and the despair that sometimes touches them. We ask, fervently. Like many a mother, she is there before us. But the asking is so important.

Today there is no shortage to our list of requests. We pray for all our sick and for those we know who have died. They are many. Yet we pray also for those beyond our personal knowledge or the reach of our community. We pray for all who have died in this last year. We pray for all who suffer at this time: those struggling for breath, whether in hospital or at home; for those waiting for treatment for their condition which they know is worsening even as they wait. We pray for the perseverance and deep resilience we need to live through these difficult times. We pray for an inner strength of spirit, as we face the turmoil of minds and hearts, trapped in the limited horizons of this lockdown. We pray for all who stand on the front line of the struggles of this pandemic, those working long shifts in difficult conditions. And I ask you to say a prayer for all our priests that we too may be steadfast in our ministry, supported so generously by you, God's faithful and beloved people.

This is a long list; and it could be a lot longer. But we need not worry for there is another lesson to be drawn from Cana in Galilee.

At his Mother's behest, Jesus not only meets the need presented to him, a shortage of wine for the wedding, but he does so in abundance. Six huge water jars, each holding twenty or thirty gallons, all changed into wine. More than enough for any wedding, so much more!

This is the measure of the Lord's compassion for us, his needy people, who have

over-calculated our cleverness and independence, forgetting that the foundations of life lie with the giver of all gifts to whom we should never fail to turn.

Yet perhaps it is not surprising that in the midst of this pandemic there is a revival of prayer. The father of a friend of mine spent some weeks in an intensive care unit, like so many others, being helped through this terrible disease. He said that he had never seen so many rosary beads before. In the hour of need we turn to her who is always close to us. The instinct to pray is deep within us. At times of need it cannot be easily resisted. Indeed, we know that the fabric of faith is so important to our daily living, and we can give a reminder of this truth to others simply by saying that we are going to pray for them. This is an offer that is rarely rejected!

This afternoon, as we gather round this lovely statue of Our Lady of Lourdes to be refreshed in our love and prayer, we again turn to our Blessed Mother, knowing that we have a place in her heart. She holds us constantly before the eyes of her Son, telling us, as she told the servants at Cana, 'Do whatever he tells you'.

At her bidding, then, we trust in his promises and seek to live by the horizon which he opens for us: the vision of true solidarity with every brother and sister, especially those in need; the vision of generous love as the secret of fulfilment; the vision of a life which death does not end but which opens into its fullness when we leave this earth. Today we heed again her words, her instruction, her example as she leads us to her Son in whom alone is our health and salvation.

Indeed, here and now she leads us into that Last Supper of the Lord, in this Eucharist. She brings us to stand with her at the foot of his Cross, made present in this holy sacrifice of the Mass. She invites us, with her, to be gentle, compassionate and firm witnesses to the hope that his victory over death brings, especially today when we feel that we are walking in its shadow. She beckons us to share in her joys, fulfilled in her heavenly crowning, a joy into which we too will be drawn at the Lord's command.

Mary, full of grace, blessed art thou among women. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Cardinal Vincent Nichols

<https://rcdow.org.uk/cardinal/homilies/homily-for-the-mass-in-honour-of-our-lady-of-lourdes-2021/>

With my thoughts and prayers. God bless

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