



GOD AND THE ATOM



OVER THE SUMMER all of us, whatever our religious beliefs, have been anxious about the growing tension in the Korean peninsula. The determination of the 'Democratic Republic of Korea' to become a nuclear weapons state, expressed in tests and trials condemned by the international community and in defiance of the United Nations, matched by hard-hitting threats from the President of the United States, have made many more worried about the possibility of a nuclear war than at any time since the Cuban missile crisis at the end of 1962. Both sides in the war of words seem to be saying that there are circumstances in which they would use nuclear weapons.

Each summer on the 6 and 9 August, very near Korea, people in Japan remember the dropping of the first atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Some of you may remember when this happened, bringing to an end the Second World War. Tens of thousands of people lost their lives instantly and many more died or suffered for many years. At the time few in the Allied nations questioned the American action - people were weary of a terrible war and wanted it to end. In Rome Pope Pius XII condemned the actions, but very few Christian leaders challenged the morality of the bombings. One of the few religious writers in this country who did so was Monsignor Ronald Knox, shown here, who died sixty years ago this summer. He had been chaplain to Roman Catholic students at Oxford between the wars and in 1945 was engaged in a new translation of the Bible (his father, incidentally, had been Anglican Bishop of Manchester and is buried in Elmers End cemetery, as he had retired to Shortlands). Knox was exasperated that Christian leaders did not question what the Americans had done, so in a few weeks he wrote a little book called *God and the Atom*. This remains one of the most original but neglected critiques of nuclear weapons ever written. Knox felt that the dropping of the atomic bombs offended against the teachings of St Paul concerning faith, hope and charity; he felt that they introduced a new element of disorder into life; he felt they would lead to a growth in individualism and selfishness. Since then the Catholic Church, along with some other Christian churches, has become more and more negative about nuclear weapons and condemned policies of nuclear deterrence. The stand-off between North Korea and the United States should prompt all of us, whatever our religious beliefs, to think deeply about the morality of policies which threaten mass destruction, the deaths of thousands of innocent people. It has cast a shadow over this summer - we all need to hope that people will move away from blood-curdling threats and engage in diplomacy and negotiation. Working for true peace and learning the lesson that war is a blind alley is something we can all try to do.

Remember you can watch services from our church live through our webcam, and also recordings of Sunday Masses and other major acts of worship - www.saintedmunds.net

FATIMA - HEAVEN ON EARTH

Last September 2016, after a successful pilgrimage to Rome for the Year of Mercy and the canonisation of Mother Teresa of Calcutta, a little mustard seed idea was sown and our parish pilgrimage committee was set up. After months of planning and background work, finally in the early hours of 11th August 2017, a group of parishioners from a number of parishes, led by Fr Louis Odudu of St Saviour's of Lewisham, set off on our way to Fatima in Portugal, where celebrations have been in full swing since May when Pope Francis began the festivities for the 100th anniversary of the apparitions to the three shepherd children Jacinta, Francisco and Lucia.

Right from the start, Fr Louis encouraged us to look within ourselves by explaining that going on Pilgrimage is a response to an inner call within us to search for the face of God. What we found was the face of God which was in our brothers, our sisters, on our coach, in pilgrims on their knees crawling to the Chapel of Apparitions, in the sanctuary, in the Basilica, in different nationalities and cultures, all coming to honour Our Lord Jesus Christ through the mysteries of the Holy Rosary and the response to the call of our Blessed Lady to pray the rosary daily.

The international rosary ceremony said in all languages of the world gave a special meaning to the universality of our Church. One had the sense that all were bound together by the shining beads of the rosary. Furthermore saying the rosary followed by the torch-lit procession of our Lady of Fatima to the Altar for the Eucharist felt more than ever that the heavens joined us in our exhortations and prayers. The sky dome was pitch black with no stars but the candlelit procession of bishops, priests and pilgrims gave the sense that all the stars of heaven had rained down on earth and 'We were the Stars'. Heaven was definitely on earth!

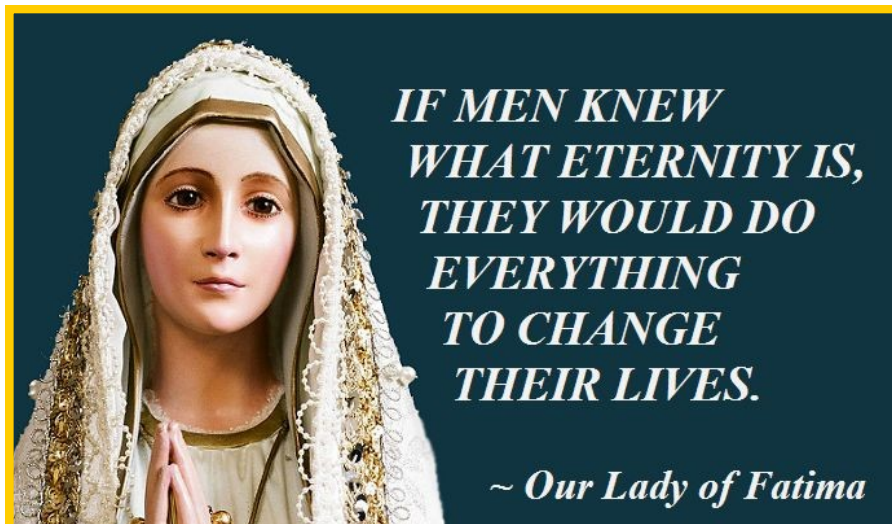
Each night the statue of Our Lady was taken on various processions in the sanctuary but on the 13th August 2017, though it was not the actual anniversary of the apparition to the three children Jacinta, Francisco, and Lucia, (because they were all in prison, Our Lady only appeared to them on the 19 August 1917), the evening procession on the 13th commemorated the fulfilment of the prophecy of Our Lady of Fatima and by co-incidence the anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall on the 13th August 1989; the statue of our Blessed Mother was taken to the piece of the wall of Berlin which has a special place in Fatima. This procession highlighted the message of peace Our Lady gave to the three shepherd children in 1917. This message is as current today as it was 100 years ago: the human race is still engaging in war and she, The Lady of the Rosary, Queen of Peace is still calling for peace and praying the Rosary. *"I am the Lady of the Rosary. Continue always to pray the rosary every day, don't lose heart. I will never forsake you. My Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the way that will lead you to God"*.

During the pilgrimage at Fatima, we had a brief moment to set aside the storms of our lives and give focus to God. Each morning started with mass, followed by private devotions. The prayer intentions from many of St Edmund's parishioners which travelled and unravelled in Fatima were each morning placed at our altar or if it was a joint international mass Fr Louis carried the envelope of intentions with him. On the last day before we left Fatima, Fr Louis carried out a special service and burned all the intentions and offered them to God with a final prayer. It was a very moving action which gave closure and comfort and the reassurance that our prayers had been heard and reached the divine realm.

Hence now that we are back from Fatima, our pilgrims' hearts keep singing and exhorting Our Lady of Fatima, Queen of Heaven.

St Edmunds Fatima Pilgrimage, 11-16th August Group.

There is no problem, I tell you, no matter how difficult it is that we cannot resolve by the prayer of the Holy Rosary". Sister Lucia of Fatima.



BECOMING A CATHOLIC - A JOURNEY IN FAITH

On **Thursday 21 September** the RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) Group will begin the 2017/18 course for new enquirers interested in learning about the Catholic Faith.

At the Easter Vigil at St. Edmund's earlier this year, four of our enquirers from the last group were joyfully received into the Catholic Church. Here is what some of them had to say about their experience.

"I think the team have done a great job in preparation and I feel as a group, we are prepared and have made friends"
– **Richard**

"The team has been absolutely great, each member different, yet inspiring. RCIA opened up a lot for me. It exceeded my expectations. A very well structured course, with a good variety of approaches" – **Natalia**

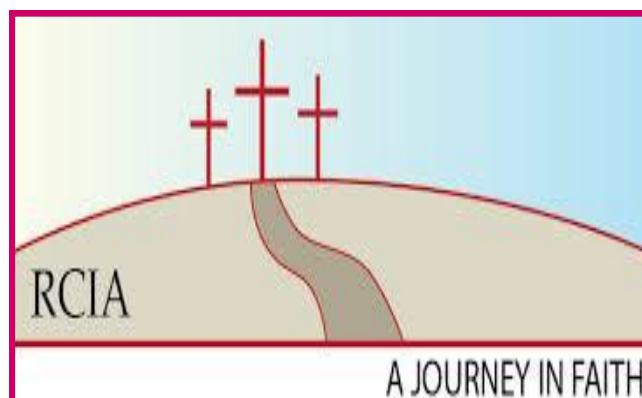
"The RCIA is an excellent process where everything is thoroughly explained and all questions are answered"
– **Laura**



Our enquirers come from all walks of life and religious backgrounds, some having no previous knowledge or experience of any religion at all.

If you are interested in becoming a Catholic, or would simply like to learn more about the Catholic Faith, then please join us, without any obligation, on **Thursday 21 September** at **No 11 Village Way, Beckenham**. Tea and coffee is available from **7.45pm** for an 8.00pm start. A warm welcome is guaranteed!

If you would like more information please contact either **Mary Deering (020 8650 9650)** or **Cathy Denne (020 8650 0051)**, speak to one of our Priests, or contact us by email at: rcia.stedsbeck@hotmail.com



PARISH CONTACTS

The Presbytery,
20 Village Way,
Beckenham BR3 3NP
Parish Office
Telephone
0208 650 0970

Fr Stephen Wymer
Parish Priest
Father Ashley Beck
Assistant Priest
Father Simplicio D'Souza
Assistant Priest
Deacon Seán Murphy

**Missionary Sisters
of St Peter Claver**
89 Shortlands Road
BR2 0JL
020 8313 3915

Salesian Sisters
25 Village Way
BR3 3NA
020 8650 6313

Masses at St.Edmund's Sundays:

6.00 p.m. (Saturday Vigil)
8.00 a.m.
9.30 a.m. (Choir)
(Family Mass 4th Sunday)
11.00 a.m. (Chorale)
5.30 p.m. (Folk Choir)
7.00 p.m.

Weekdays:

10.00 a.m. (Mon - Sat) and
7.30 p.m.(Wed only)

27 Village Way

8.15 a.m. Mondays

Claver Convent

8.15 a.m. (Tues – Sat)

St Mary's School:

Fri 9.10 a.m. (term time only)

Holydays of Obligation:

(Vigil) 7.30 p.m.
7.30 a.m.; 10.00 a.m.;
12 noon; 8.00 p.m.

Confessions:

Saturday 10.30 – 11.30 a.m.
5.00 – 6.00 p.m.,
after evening Mass and at
other times - on request.



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