

ST MARY'S & ST PAUL'S NEWSLETTER

The R.C. Diocese of Shrewsbury is a registered charity

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Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary time

19th July 2020

THEME: God is lenient with us.

Through our human weakness we often sin, and sin is always destructive. Yet although we deserve God's punishment, he treats us mercifully when we are sorry, and gives us plenty of opportunities to become sorry. If we are not repentant, his Spirit is needed to lead us to the point where we are repentant, and he gives us his promise that he will forgive everyone who forgives him.

MASS TIMES: St Mary's: Sunday 9-30am Mon, Wed, Thurs, Fri 9-00am. Sat 10-00am.
Requiem Mass Tuesday 10-30am. Marjorie Ofsarnie.

If you are intending to come to Mass on Sunday or during the week, please let Father Oliver know, by phone or email including the number of people planning to attend. This is to allow us to assess the likely numbers and consider alternative arrangements if demand is high. This requirement to advise Father of the intent to attend will remain in place for the foreseeable future.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE: Matthew 13:24-43. While in this life we may find that the weeds and the thorns seem to be flourishing better than the wheat, incredible sums of money change hands for things which are of little lasting value; dubious entertainers and money jugglers are highly paid and esteemed by many, while much less glamorous yet infinitely valuable and caring work is poorly paid and acclaimed. If we are tempted to be hurt by the injustice of how, often, evil appears to receive all the rewards, we can re-read this parable which acknowledges that good and evil must grow alongside each other until the end of time, when only what is good will survive.

The message of today's parable is something that Jesus lived throughout his ministry. He reached out to all sorts of people, mixing with whores, priests, crooks, scribes, politicians, children, tax collectors. Religious separatism was something Jesus refused to advocate, making it his business to seek out and save the lost. The Pharisees, whose very name means "separate ones", criticised him for associating with the wrong crowd. But Jesus knew that all communities are a mixture of good and bad, the crooked and the cracked. And further, he knew that it isn't always easy to tell which is which. In the end Jesus is the one weeded out by the authorities and thrown into the killing fields.

The message of the parable still challenges the church today. It is not the place of the church to set up inquisitions, support witch hunts, organise purges to free the field of unapproved supporters. The church is not God. As Christians we have no authority to pronounce the final judgement on anyone. The last word cannot be said about anyone until death and then it is over to God. St Paul underlines the same point when he tells the church in Corinth; "there must be no passing of premature judgement; Leave that until the Lord comes"

MASS AT ST MARY'S: Mass will be at **9:30am** with the church doors open from **9am**. We will adopt the 1 meter plus approach to social distancing and there is a maximum capacity of 50 people. There will be procedures in place to help keep everyone safe. These procedures worked well last week and we had over 30 people attending Mass at St Mary's.

Please note the following points for Mass attendance on Sunday:

- Church will be open at 9am to allow staggered arrival times and avoid a queue of people arriving immediately before Mass. Everyone will need to sanitise their hands and will be escorted to a pew by a steward. This will take time and will be better handled if people arrive at different times.
- As we are operating a 1 meter plus social distancing policy, please wear a face mask or covering. Children are still welcome. They will also need to wear a face covering and stay in the pew throughout Mass.
- Holy Communion will be distributed after the final blessing and, after receiving communion or a blessing, you will be asked to leave church directly, via the front door into Zetland Street. Please follow the instructions of the stewards who will direct you when to come for communion.
- **The toilets will not be open.**
- Mass will be shorter than usual, around 30 minutes and there will be no singing.
- Please be prepared to follow the direction of the stewards who will be on duty and if more people arrive than there is capacity for, the stewards will have to refuse entry.
- There will be Mass sheets available, but these **will not be for the correct** Sunday and will be to support you in following the Mass and praying the Gloria and Creed.
- The readings for Sunday 19th July are attached separately and you can print these to bring with you, if required. Please remember to take them home at the end of Mass.

Remember that the Sunday obligation to attend mass remains suspended and if you are anxious or concerned about coming to Mass, you can stay at home with a clear conscience. Do not come if you are exhibiting any symptoms or have been in contact with anyone who is suspected of having the virus.

RESUMPTION OF PUBLIC CEREMONIES AT ST PAUL'S: We have submitted the necessary risk assessments and have now been given permission by the Diocese to open for the celebration of Holy Mass. Mass will be celebrated at **6pm on Saturday evening, 25th July**. Arrangements will be the same as at St Mary's, with 1 metre plus social distancing, the wearing of masks, Holy Communion after the final blessing and sanitising on entry and exit. Stewards will be on hand to give direction. The maximum capacity will be 48. **Please let Father know if you plan to come to Mass on Saturday either by telephone or by email.**

END OF TERM: All Saints' and St Mary's have closed for the summer holidays. St Paul's will close this week. The schools will reopen on September 1st with all years returning to the classroom. This will be quite an experience for many of our young people as they have not been in school since the lockdown. However, they have not been idle, with very challenging homework sent out electronically or in the post. Home schooling also proved to be challenging to their parents, especially those parents who were working from home. All Saints' are also keeping busy during the holidays.

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK: Please keep our sick and housebound parishioners in your daily prayers. If you know of anyone who is in special need of prayers or comfort, please let Fr. Oliver know.

ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION: My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. I love you above all things, I desire to receive you into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace you as if you were already there and unite myself wholly to you. Never permit me to be separated from you. Amen

SHARE THE NEWS: Please share the news of the resumption of the public celebration of Holy Mass at St Mary's by passing on the information contained in this Newsletter.

THE PARISH PRAYER: Father, pour out your Spirit upon our community and grant us a new vision of your glory; a new experience of your power; a new faithfulness to your word; a new consecration to your service. That your love may grow among us and your kingdom come. Through Christ our Lord Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION: Soul of Christ, be my sanctification. Body of Christ, be my salvation. Blood of Christ, fill all my veins. Water from the side of Christ, wash out my stains. May Christ's passion, strengthen me, O good Jesus, hear me. In thy wounds, I fain would hide, never to be parted from your side. Guard me when my foes assail me. Call me when my life shall fail me. Command me, then to come to Thee that I through all eternity with Thy saints will praise Thee.

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION: While it was the custom from the beginning for Christians to reserve the Blessed Sacrament so that communion could be brought to the sick and the dying, the practice of adoration outside of Mass did not emerge until the thirteenth century. Eucharistic adoration has been zealously promoted by the papacy and many of the great saints of the Church since St Paul VI explained that 'to visit the Blessed Sacrament is ... a proof of gratitude, an expression of love, and a duty of adoration toward Christ our Lord (Mysterium Fidei 66). While Pope St John Paul II sought to rekindle in the Church a sense of 'Eucharistic amazement'. (Ecclesia de Eucharista, 6)

CHANGING TIMES: Our modern culture, with its increasing emphasis on individualism and material consumerist goals, has come to be seen by many as a world of uncertainty, disconnectedness and social fragmentation. We are undoubtedly still the same human race, but we cannot simply adapt as quickly as the technology we produce. As many of the advancements that have emerged since the advent of our technological era have brought about major societal changes at breakneck speed, many of us have been left without the tools or resilience to handle these rapid shifts. With the integration of smartphones and laptops into our daily lives we have become increasingly vulnerable to major threats to sustainable mental health such as online gambling, addictive gaming, excessive exposure to violent imagery, porn, fake news, online bullying, invasion of privacy, and sedentary lifestyles that come from hours spent staring at the screen. We cannot deny the fact that it is our young people in particular who are bearing the brunt of these pressures. *Joan Freeman, in Modern Culture and wellbeing.*

FROM GRATITUDE TO HEALING: A practice that can bring us healing and consolation after bereavement, is to write down all the reasons we are grateful for our departed loved ones. Gratitude has immense healing power, and we are bound to have countless memories for which we are thankful. We thank God for having put them in our lives and for the hope of being reunited with them again. We entrust them to the care and protection of His loving mercy as we continue to practice the third spiritual principle of healing from grief

ECUMENICAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICER: Prompted by the impending retirement of the existing post-holder, Churches Together in Cheshire seeks to make an interim appointment to the above position. This position for 15 hours a week, is to facilitate and support the churches of Cheshire in their relationships with one another and their wider mission in the world. The salary is £8,025 p.a. The post is for two years, whilst a process of review and revisioning is conducted. Completed application forms are required for the 31st July. Interviews in August. Further details of this post and an application form, either printed or electronic, please contact Andrew Taylor on 01270780529 e-mail ceo.ctic@gmail.com

A WORD FOR ALL SEASONS: "A word for All Seasons" will be on BBC 4's Sunday Worship programme this Sunday from 8-10. Fr Michael Hall, a priest from the diocese of Leeds, will lead 'A Word for All Seasons' to reflect on how the 'God who speaks' meets us in changing circumstances of our lives- especially significant at a time when many Christians will have been turning to the Bible for comfort through the coronavirus pandemic.

OFFERTORY: Thank you to everyone who has made an offering to St Mary's or St Paul's during this ongoing period of pandemic. There will be no collection at Mass on Sunday, but there will be a basket for your offertory as you leave Church. We have not resumed regular counting yet and so updates on the offertory receipts will be provided in due course.

TOTE: The 100 Club remains suspended for the moment. Any payments received have been recorded and will be used for future draws. When the draws resume, individual balances will be available.

BIDDING PRAYERS for the Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary time

With trust in God's faithful love, let us turn to the Lord in prayer, asking him to bless all our efforts to value the people with whom we interact this week and to value the natural world.

We pray for the church: that it may reach out to people outside the community, particularly those who are vulnerable or dealing with hardship, bereavement, or disappointment, that they may find consolation and receive God's gift of peace.

Lord, hear us

We pray for the children, parents and teachers during this summer holiday: may it be a time of refreshment and increased awareness of God's compassion and love.

Lord, hear us

We pray that people may learn to value God's creation- from the tiniest of seeds to the shade of trees, to the harvest of food crops –and work to protect it.

Lord, hear us

We pray for those who do not know God: that our lives may be effective witness to them of God's loving kindness and mercy

Lord, hear us

We pray that we may use the blessings of this holiday period to grow closer to God and to reflect on the choices we make in society

Lord, hear us

We ask Mary help of Christians, St Winefride and all the saints of the diocese of Shrewsbury to intercede for us as we place all our intentions before the Lord.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst all women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Priest: God our Father you are good and forgiving. Hear our prayers and open us to receive your Holy Spirit and live every day at peace, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The readings for Sunday 19th July

A Reading from the Book of Wisdom 12:13, 16-19

There is no god, other than you, who cares for every thing, to whom you might have to prove that you never judged unjustly. Your justice has its source in strength, your sovereignty over all makes you lenient to all. You show your strength when your sovereign power is questioned and you expose the insolence of those who know it; but, disposing of such strength, you are mild in judgment, you govern us with great lenience, for you have only to will, and your power is there. By acting thus you have taught a lesson to your people how the virtuous man must be kindly to his fellow men, and you have given your sons the good hope that after sin you will grant repentance.

Psalm 85

Response: **O Lord, you are good and forgiving**

O Lord, you are good and forgiving,
Full of love to all who call.
Give heed, O Lord, to my prayer
And attend to the sound of my voice **Response**

All the nations shall come to adore you
And glorify your name, O Lord:
For you are great and do marvellous deeds,
You who alone are God. **Response**

But you, God of mercy and compassion,
Slow to anger, O Lord,
Abounding in love and truth,
Turn and take pity on me. **Response**

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans 8:26-27

The Spirit comes to help us in our weakness. For when we cannot choose words in order to pray properly, the Spirit himself expresses our plea in a way that could never be put into words, and God who knows everything in our hearts knows perfectly well what he means, and that the pleas of the saints expressed by the Spirit are according to the mind of God.

Alleluia, alleluia! May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ enlighten the eyes of our mind, so that we can see what hope his call holds for us. **Alleluia!**

A Reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew 13:24-43

Jesus put another parable before the crowds: 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. While everybody was asleep his enemy came, sowed darnel all among the wheat, and made off. When the new wheat sprouted and ripened, the darnel appeared as well. The owner's servants went to him and said, "Sir, was it not good seed that you sowed in your field? If so, where does the darnel come from?" "Some enemy has done this" he answered. And the servants said, "Do you want us to go and weed it out?" But he said, "No, because when you weed out the darnel you might pull up the wheat with it. Let them both grow till the harvest; and at harvest time I shall say to the reapers: First collect the darnel and tie it in bundles to be burnt, then gather the wheat into my barn.'"'

He put another parable before them: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field. It is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the biggest shrub of all and becomes a tree so that the birds of the air come and shelter in its branches.'

He told them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like the yeast a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour till it was leavened all through.'

In all this Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables; indeed, he would never speak to them except in parables. This was to fulfil the prophecy:

*I will speak to you in parables
and expound things hidden since the foundation of the world.*

Then, leaving the crowds, he went to the house; and his disciples came to him and said, 'Explain the parable about the darnel in the field to us.' He said in reply, 'The sower of the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world; the good seed is the subjects of the kingdom; the darnel, the subjects of the evil one; the enemy who sowed them, the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; the reapers are the angels. Well then, just as the darnel is gathered up and burnt in the fire, so it will be at the end of time. The Son of Man will send his angels and they will gather out of his kingdom all things that provoke offences and all who do evil, and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth. Then the virtuous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Listen, anyone who has ears!'