

ST MARY'S & ST PAUL'S NEWSLETTER

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

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Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary time

26th July 2020

THEME: Lasting treasure God's plan for us is to become images of his Son, and he works unceasingly for our good to that end. As we know him better we shall gain the wisdom of discernment allowing us to see God's insight. When we realise what kind of being God is and the extent of his love for us, it is like finding treasure of priceless value in comparison with which many other possessions seem expendable.

MASS TIMES: St Mary's: Sunday 9-30am Monday - Friday 9-00am. Saturday 10-00am.

St Paul's: Saturday vigil 6-00 pm (For Sat 26th July this Mass is full, please consider coming to St Mary's either on Sunday morning or during the week.)

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 13:44-52. One of the most striking aspects of this parable is the excitement following discovery. It is a feeling we all have experienced at one time or another- the sheer delight welling up and bubbling over which takes you back to childhood magic. Sometimes among church-going people, where one would expect to see much of this excitement at having found some treasure, there is instead the dullness of habit and no sparkle. What does Jesus mean, then, by saying that the kingdom of heaven is like finding a treasure? Can it really be a perpetual thrill of discovering something precious? In which case, why doesn't it show? It may be that we can reasonably forget about the treasure when we are distracted by the frantic business of living; or can we put it carefully in a special box and spend more trouble polishing and fussing with the box than with its contents. For there are certainly Christians who 'bubble'; who seem to have a happiness and excitement about life which is based on their faith and gives them great inner peace. It can attract some, and make others envious, as there are always people who seem quite happy to do unpleasant as well as pleasant work who are outgoing, friendly and slow to take offence like that on the ordinary person's life. And so it is! But we cannot just go and collect it and then we shall find it when we are least expecting to; but the discovery will make us want to rethink and reorder our whole life.

STUMBLING ON TREASURE: In the spring of 1947 a Bedouin shepherd called Muhammed the Wolf was shepherding his goats on the western shore of the Dead Sea. One of the boy's goats had strayed, and to follow it he had to climb a steep cliff. Passing a cave in the rock face, he threw a stone inside; and when he heard the sound of breakage he became frightened and ran back to his friend. Together they returned and entered the cave. Inside the cave they found several large clay jars: inside the jars, wrapped in a length of linen, was one of the greatest of modern archaeological discoveries: the Dead Sea Scrolls. The two young shepherds had stumbled on a marvellous treasure, but they did not realise it. They tried to sell the scrolls in Bethlehem to a merchant, but he refused to give them twenty pounds they were asking for. It wasn't until the four scrolls came into the hands of the Syrian patriarch of Jerusalem and three scrolls were smuggled out of the country to the United States that the treasure trove came to light. Among the ancient manuscripts was the rule of the Qumran community and fragments of scripture. A Carbon 14 test on the line of the scrolls gave the median date of 33 A.D.

At around the same date, some miles north of Qumran, Jesus of Nazareth told the story about the farm-worker who stumbles on a great treasure which has been hidden in the field. This man appreciates the value of his find – probably a jar of money and valuables. He is an astute character: the first thing he does is to bury the treasure again, then he sells everything he owns to buy the field. He experiences the great joy of discovery; he knows the value of his find; he is prepared to pay the cost of possessing it. We know that Jesus had to give up everything he valued – his family, his home, his security – to do his Father’s will and preach the kingdom of God. For Jesus there was no greater thing than his Father’s will: when he uncovered what it was, he renounced everything to make it his own. His own family and neighbours thought his ways either puzzling or foolish; and he gave his own life, even his disciples could not understand this ultimate folly. But there was a purpose in it. Even in death Jesus kept hold of his treasure. None of us can gain anything of value without renouncing something.

MASS AT ST MARY’S: Mass will be at **9:30am** with the church doors open from **9am**. There is a maximum capacity of 50 people and over 40 people attended last Sunday. There will be procedures in place to help keep everyone safe.

- Face masks must be worn.
- Please do not come to Mass if you are exhibiting any symptoms such as a high temperature or are feeling unwell
- Church will be open at 9am to allow staggered arrival times and avoid a queue of people arriving immediately before 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 aware that if we reach our maximum capacity then you may not be allowed entry.

MASS AT ST PAUL'S: Mass will be at **6pm** on Saturday with the church doors open from **5.30pm**. There is a maximum capacity of 48 people. The procedure will be very similar to that which has operated at St Mary's over the last two Sunday's:

- Face masks must be worn.
- Please do not come to Mass if you are exhibiting any symptoms such as a high temperature or are feeling unwell
- Church will be open at 5:30pm to allow staggered arrival times and avoid a queue of people arriving immediately before 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 left hand aisle and out of the side door to the rear of the church. 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 aware that if we reach our maximum capacity then you may not be allowed entry.

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.

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

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.

MIRACLE

Not the one who takes up his bed and walks
But the ones who have known him all along
And carry him in –
Their shoulders numb, the ache and stoop deep locked
In their backs, the stretcher handles
Slippery with a sweat. And no let-up
Until he's strapped on tight, made tiltable
And raised to the tiled roof, then lowered for healing.
Be mindful of them as they stand and wait
For the burn of a paid-out ropes to cool,
Their slight light headedness and incredulity
To pass, those ones who had known him all along.

Seamus Heaney. Human Chain

ECUMENICAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICER: Prompted by the impending retirement of the existing post-holder, Churches Together in Cheshire seek 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 re-visioning is conducted. Completed application forms are required for the 31st July. Interviews in August. For 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

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.

DIOCESAN PILGRIMAGE TO LOURDES: A note from Fr. David Long. It was with great sadness that back in March we realised that it would not be possible to go ahead with our annual pilgrimage to Lourdes. We are very anxious, however, to reach out to our regular pilgrims and to all the people around the Diocese to invite them to join us in a spiritual pilgrimage online during the time that we would have been in Lourdes. With this in mind we have created a Virtual Pilgrimage which includes daily mass led by the bishop or different priests associated with the pilgrimage. As well as many regular devotions and activities that form our pilgrimage. The programme can be downloaded from the pilgrimage website. www.shrewsburypilgrimage.co.uk The Diocesan website www.dioceseofshrewsbury.org or the virtual pilgrimage website <https://shrewsburylourdes.com>

BIDDING PRAYERS for the Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary time

Priest:

“Ask what you would like me to give you” said the Lord to Solomon. Humbly, we bring our own needs and petitions before the Lord.

We pray for the Pope that he may be given discerning heart to govern God’s people, the church.

Lord, hear us.

We pray for bishops, priests, religious sisters and brothers, and all who make personal sacrifices in the service of God’s kingdom: that their generosity may inspire vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

Lord, hear us.

We pray for world leaders: that they may use their power and influence for the good of all, and stand firm against the lure of greed.

Lord, hear us.

We pray for the young people of the world, especially those searching for meaning in their lives: that they may find what most deeply satisfies their human spirit.

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 26th July

Entrance Antiphon

God is in his holy place, God who unites those who dwell in his house; he himself gives might and strength to his people.

A Reading from the first Book of Kings 3:5,7-12

The Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream and said, 'Ask what you would like me to give you.' Solomon replied, 'O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in succession to David my father. But I am a very young man, unskilled in leadership. Your servant finds himself in the midst of this people of yours that you have chosen, a people so many its number cannot be counted or reckoned. Give your servant a heart to understand how to discern between good and evil, for who could govern this people of yours that is so great?' It pleased the Lord that Solomon should have asked for this. 'Since you have asked for this' the Lord said 'and not asked for long life for yourself or riches or the lives of your enemies, but have asked for a discerning judgement for yourself, here and now I do what you ask. I give you a heart wise and shrewd as none before you has had and none will have after you.'

Psalm 118(119)

Response: **Lord, how I love your law!**

My part, I have resolved, O Lord,
is to obey your word.

The law from your mouth means more to me
than silver and gold. **Response**

Let your love be ready to console me
by your promise to your servant.
Let your love come and I shall live
for your law is my delight. **Response**

That is why I love your commands
more than finest gold,
why I rule my life by your precepts,
and hate false ways. **Response**

Your will is wonderful indeed;
therefore I obey it.
The unfolding of your word gives light
and teaches the simple. **Response**

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans 8:28-30

We know that by turning everything to their good, God co-operates with all those who love him, with all those he has called according to his purpose. They are the ones he chose specially long ago and intended to

become true images of his Son, so that his Son might be the eldest of many brothers. He called those he intended for this; those he called he justified, and with those he justified he shared his glory.

Alleluia, alleluia! I call you friends, says the Lord, because I have made known to you everything I have learnt from my Father. **Alleluia!**

A Reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew 13:44-52

Jesus said to the crowds, 'The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which someone has found; he hides it again, goes off happy, sells everything he owns and buys the field.

'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls; when he finds one of great value he goes and sells everything he owns and buys it.

'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea that brings in a haul of all kinds. When it is full, the fishermen haul it ashore; then, sitting down, they collect the good ones in a basket and throw away those that are no use. This is how it will be at the end of time: the angels will appear and separate the wicked from the just to throw them into the blazing furnace where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth.

'Have you understood all this?' They said, 'Yes.' And he said to them, 'Well then, every scribe who becomes a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out from his storeroom things both new and old.

Communion Antiphon

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and never forget all his benefits.

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise You,

We bless You

We adore you

We glorify You

We give You thanks for Your great glory,

Lord God, heavenly King,

O God, almighty Father almighty.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only-begotten Son.

Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,

you take away the sins of the world,

have mercy on us;

You take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer;

You are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.
For you alone are the Holy One.
You alone are the Lord.
You alone are the most high,
Jesus Christ
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
Of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate
of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored and
glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen