

ST MARY'S & ST PAUL'S NEWSLETTER

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

Parish Priest: Father Oliver O'Doherty 29 Zetland St, Dukinfield, Cheshire SK16 4EJ

Website: stmaryandstpaul.org.uk Email: o.odoherty@ntlworld.com

Telephone: 0161 330 2424

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary time

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THEME: God tends his creation so that it can bear fruit.

With care and painstaking love, God provides all that is necessary for his creation to be fruitful. Sometimes, what is needed is unpleasant, but ultimately will be for the best. The process of growing always involves pain, and the whole created order is still 'growing'. The speed of growth in us can be altered to the extent of our receptivity.

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

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE: Matthew 13:1-23. Even when God actually walked on the earth as a man, the Word was not soaked up by everyone. Their eyes and ears were fully functional, yet they did not notice the obvious, because their inner eyes and ears were shut fast by expectation, complacency and lack of desire to change in any way. None of this alters the quality of seed itself, which, if it falls on good, rich soil, can produce excellent crop. But the parable of the sower does emphasise the other factors involved in fruit production - our own responses, perseverance, capacity to learn to trust and our willingness to be committed whole heartedly. It is a good idea to use the parable sometimes during self-examination, as, of course, there is always the possibility even of good soil becoming stony or choked with weeds.

ILLUSTRATION OF THE GOSPEL: Faith is a mysterious thing. Many devout parents have to bear the sorrow of knowing that the faith that they love and cherish has not passed on down the generations. Despite their having done everything possible, their children have chosen not to embrace the faith in which they were raised. It's easy for people in such circumstances to blame themselves: maybe we should have set a better example, sent them to a better school or had a more effective parish catechetical programme. It's often said that the faith is caught not taught. This may be true in many cases, but families where a vibrant and healthy faith is the norm and prayer a regular practice can still produce atheist children, whereas families where there is not an ounce of obvious faith can produce children who grow to be ardent Christians. We need not despair, even if we have a certain sense of regret or failure. One of the Eucharistic prayers reminds us that we not only pray for the shepherds of the church, whose faith sustains that of the whole community, but we also pray for those whose faith is known to God alone. The many millions of people in the world who can be described as "people of goodwill" that have that good will because of God's grace. A modern theologian spoke of "anonymous Christians", those who live by the gifts of the Holy Spirit even if they don't acknowledge Jesus. However little room anyone makes for God in their life, God will always occupy that space and make it fruitful.

A MESSAGE FROM THE METROPOLITAN ARCHBISHOPS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH: The following is a resume of their message. The reopening of our churches for individual prayer was an important step on our journey towards resuming communal worship. We want to thank everyone within the Catholic community for sustaining the life of faith in such creative ways, not least in the family home. We thank our priests for celebrating mass faithfully for their people, and for the innovative ways in which they have enabled participation through live-streaming and other means. We are grateful for the pastoral care shown by our clergy to those for whom lockdown has been especially difficult, particularly to the

bereaved. We recognise too the chaplaincy services that have played a vital role to those in most need. Our lives have been changed by the experience of the pandemic and it is clear we cannot simply return to how things were before lockdown. We remain centred on Jesus and His command at the last Supper "Do this in memory of me" We must now rebuild what it means to be Eucharistic communities, hold fast to all we hold dear, while at the same time exploring creative ways to meet changed circumstances. It is important to reaffirm that, at present, the obligation to attend mass on Sunday remains suspended and a significant number of churches may remain closed for some time for a variety of reasons. Please be aware that there will be a limit to the number of people who can attend mass in our churches due to social distancing. We need to reflect carefully on how and when we might be able to attend mass. We cannot return immediately to our customary practices. This next step is not, in any sense, a moment when we are going 'back to normal'. We ask everyone to think carefully about how and when they will return to mass. When we return there will be no singing and mass will be shorter. We ask everybody to respect the guidance and instructions they will receive from their parish priest. "As I have loved you" said the Lord Jesus "so you must love one another" The lockdown has brought forth remarkable acts of charity, of loving kindness, from Catholics across our communities as they have cared for the needy and the vulnerable. Now we can return to the source of that charity, Christ himself, present sacramentally, body and blood, soul and divinity, Holy Communion. As we prepare to gather again to worship, let us be respectful of each other and come together in thanksgiving to God for the immense gift of the Eucharist. Cardinal Nichols Archbishop of Westminster, Malcolm McMahon Archbishop of Liverpool. Bernard Longley Archbishop of Birmingham, John Wilson Archbishop of Southwark.

RESUMPTION OF PUBLIC CEREMONIES AT ST MARY'S: St Mary's will resume the public celebration of **Holy Mass today, Sunday 12th July**. Mass will be at **9:30am** with the church doors open from **9am**. We will adopt the '1 meter plus' approach to social distancing, which will allow more people in the church and there will be procedures in place to help keep everyone safe. There is a maximum capacity of 30 to 50 people. 30 people assumes that there are mostly couples who can sit together and this can extend to 50 if there are groups of 3 or 4 people who are able to sit together. Please note the following points:

- If you are intending to come to Mass on Sunday 12th July, 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. So far more than 30 people have indicated an intention to attend.
- 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.

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 are in the process of undertaking a risk assessment for St Paul's to establish how and when we can safely open the church for public worship. More news will follow.

RECENT DEATH: Marjorie Ofsarnie we offer our sincere sympathy to her family, relatives and friends.

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.

SEA SUNDAY: Today is Sea Sunday when the church prays for all those who live and work at sea. Without them we would not have most of the items we buy in the shops. The Apostleship of the sea, is the church's official maritime agency and is staffed by chaplains at all the main ports throughout the country to see to the welfare of those who work on the ships and in the docks. If you wish to donate it will be greatly appreciated. For further information www.apostleshipofthesea.org.uk

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.

HOPE AND EUROPE'S FUTURE: Christians are people of hope. They nurture expectations and look to the future. They are political beings. They experience a call to build a culture of love in which they can articulate their expectations for the future, and our case for the future of Europe, in a globalizing and pluralist world. A culture of love offers the necessary rational framework for dealing constructively with otherness - the otherness of my neighbours, the otherness of our created universe, the otherness of our own emerging self, and the radical otherness of God. According to Christian wisdom and experience, love represents the only way forward when approaching this interlinked fourfold manifestation of otherness. Werner G. Jeanrond, Reasons for Hope.

TRUE LOVE: Once again, love must not be confused with like. The point is not to be like everything and everybody - not even God could seriously issue such a command. Rather to love means to respect the other as other, even if I should not like him or her. Hence, love often implies hard work and intimate engagement, contrary to popular opinion, love ought not to be reduced to sentimental feeling of harmony or nostalgic romanticism. Werner G Jeanrond. Reasons for Hope.

OFFERTORY: Thank you to everyone who has made an offering to St Mary's or St Paul's during this ongoing period of pandemic. We have received over £1200 in cash and cheque donations in addition to the standing orders, with some new standing orders also having been set up. There will be no collection at Mass on Sunday, but there will be a basket for your offertory as you leave Church.

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 Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Priest:

We ask God to strengthen our faith and make it fruitful in lives that imitate Jesus.

We pray for the Pope and all who lead us in faith: that they may grow each day in the imitation of Christ.

Lord hear us

We pray for all those whose faith is failing: that they may experience the closeness of Jesus and may be drawn to follow him with courage.

Lord hear us

We pray for persecuted Christians and all who suffer in the cause of right: that God may be their refuge and strength and helper in times of trouble.

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 for all young people: that they may grow in faith, hope and love and live the fullness of life which is God's dream for them.

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: Loving Father our faith is your gift to us. Hear our prayers and draw us each day closer to you, through Christ our Lord. Amen