

Parish of St Mary, Middlewich & St Margaret Ward, Holmes Chapel

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Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, 12th July 2020

Saturday	11th July	6.30pm	Priest's Int
Sunday	12th July	9.00am 11.00am	The parishioners All Clergy
Monday	13th July	9.00am 6.30pm	Kathleen Litherland Anniv. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament
Tuesday	14th July	9.00am	Special Int IB
Wednesday	15th July	7.30pm	All Homeless People St Bonaventure
Thursday	16th July	9.00am	Private Int.
Friday	17th July	9.00am	Private Int.
Saturday	18th July	6.30pm	Anne Casey B'day
Sunday	19th July	9.00am 11.00am	Priest's Int The Parishioners

Sacrament of Reconciliation : On request
Sacrament of Baptism On hold until further notice.

Please Pray for

ALL who are sick at home and in hospital: Stephen Grey, Margaret McCallum, Sara O'Brien, Jamie Connor, John Bomford, Nathan Carter, Larry Porter, Gillian Robinson, Tim Bradbury, Roy Yearsley, Peter Hannon, Stan Rosiak, Sadie Everard, Alex Randall, Jenny Ogden, John Evans, Shirley Gaskell, Joan Upton, Karen Potts, Mary Morris, Michael McCluskey, Jan D, Margaret Scarlett, Fr Paul Hughes, Deacon Philip White, Martin Armitt, Fr Jim McGrath, Ursula Finn, Dorothy Worthington.



ALL who have died recently.

ALL whose anniversaries occur at this time: Norah Anne Tully, Ron Yearsley, Roy Hewitt, Sarah Millington, William Bannaghan, Solomon Glover, Michael Hughes, Brian Clarke, Elizabeth Christall, Joseph Regan, Anne Baker, Margaret Mary Steven, William Innes, Molly Galbraith, Lily Theresa Whalley, Mary Kirkham, Sr Ruth, Ann Haggerty, John McHale, Andrew Reagan, Ray Richardson, Rev James Gaskell, Rev Albert Knight.

Please note that all Masses from now on will be public, but with a maximum congregation of 50. The 11.00am Mass on Sunday will also be streamed for those who still cannot attend Mass, but other Masses will not. There is still no Sunday obligation so if you prefer you can come to a weekday Mass. There will be Exposition this week. Attendance last weekend was very low, especially on the Sunday. Don't stay away because you think you will not get in. All Masses are well under-attended so far!

**Welcome back to Mass. If you are coming :
 Wear a mask; Social distance when queuing;
 sanitise your hands on entry:
 Follow the one way system and instructions
 from stewards (wearing aprons to identify
 them). Communion in the hand only, no chalice.
 Instructions will be given by Fr Peter. Strict
 limit of 50, no exceptions. Box for offerings at
 back of church. Leave promptly, as instructed,
 at the end of Mass, not before. THERE ARE
 NO TOILETS AVAILABLE. WE ARE NOT
 ALLOWED TO USE THE PARISH CENTRE**

Dear Parishioners,

From now on there will be no more Church Open for Private Prayer sessions as we will be celebrating public Masses every day. Please do not think this means we are back to normal: There are lots of restrictions and regulations.

Masses can only be held in churches which have been approved as fulfilling the Covid secure conditions, so Mass cannot be celebrated at St Margaret's. Numbers at St Mary's are strictly restricted to 50 per Mass, first come first served, but as low numbers attended last week, Fr Peter will celebrate three Masses this weekend. We have cut the 4.30 Mass. You will only be allowed in if you are wearing a face mask (We cannot provide these: it would cost us £100 + each weekend) The same rules apply to weekday Mass. Masses will be shorter than usual but the good news is that you will be able to receive the Eucharist, but only the host and only in the hand. There is to be no congregational singing, you must remain one metre apart, except from members of your own household, and must sanitise your hands as you enter church. You must enter down the side aisles, sit only in the marked places and exit via the centre aisle. This process, and the numbers, will be overseen by two stewards at each Mass. Please follow their instructions. If 50 people have already entered you will be asked to come to another Mass (This has not happened so far). There is still no obligation to attend Mass on Sunday, so those who can come during the week are encouraged to do so. We hope to continue streaming the 11.00am Mass on Sundays for those who still cannot attend. After each Mass you will be asked to leave promptly and church will have to be closed and thoroughly cleaned in preparation for the next Mass. The provision of the Masses is dependant on there being sufficient volunteers as stewards and cleaners. We have sufficient volunteers for this weekend but offers of help for future weekends and weekdays should be emailed to the parish office. At the beginning of each Mass Fr Peter will give additional detailed instructions. It is important that you listen carefully and follow these. They will include instructions for Communion.

We intend to take the necessary steps to make St Margaret's Covid secure, but due to its restricted capacity, it cannot be used for Sunday Mass until distancing regulations are eased, as doing so would reduce the overall number of parishioners able to attend weekend Masses.

There is a lot to take in and rules may change, but let us not lose sight of the fact that we can once again gather to worship together and celebrate Eucharist. Alleluia!

Fr Peter, Deacon Tony, Deacon Chris

CAFOD's response to coronavirus in Asia and the Middle East: In the Middle East, our local experts are using your donations to continue their vital peacebuilding work and ensuring that legal advice can be given online. Volunteers and priests are delivering emergency food parcels to vulnerable families in the West Bank and we are also reaching out to Bedouin communities with health equipment and information. [£6 could buy a hygiene pack for a family.](#) Staff and volunteers are also already in vulnerable communities spreading essential health messages through village posters, socially-distanced visits to families and giving out PPE. In Myanmar, local experts are working alongside health departments and the Church to provide safe places for people to quarantine and to help set up track and trace systems. In Bangladesh they've moved quickly to give cash to the poorest families – led by widows, or those living with disabilities - to buy life-saving food and PPE. : <https://cafod.org.uk/Give/Donate-to-Emergencies/Coronavirus-appeal>

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is available on request, but outside, not in the Confessional. Please ring or email to make a request. The printed side of the bulletin is available on the website.

Those who came to Mass last week said that they felt very safe and it was lovely to be back even though they were nervous about coming, so please follow their example and give it a try!

Many of you will already be aware that it has been an eventful week at the presbytery. Fr Peter suffered a minor stroke on Monday last week. He has had multiple tests at hospital and is on medication. He is feeling fine now and intends to celebrate Masses, but is not allowed to drive for a month, so is unlikely to be visiting parishioners and has to take things easy for a while, so please bear this in mind. He thanks you for good wishes & prayers already received and promised.

Scripture Group every Tues at 7.00pm starting on Tues 23rd June. We use Zoom and look at the scripture (particularly the Gospel) for the following Sunday. If you would like to join in send an email to: stmarysmiddlewich@stmarysmiddlewich.org.uk as we will need your e-mail address to send the Zoom invitation (e-mail addresses will not be used for any other purpose). This is open to anyone, not just parishioners.



There is no best time to sow the good news of the kingdom. Any time will do. Its fruit is perennial. Any act of compassion, of kindness, a word of forgiveness, a smile, a teaching that liberates, can take root and touch us and open us to the presence of the mystery of divine mercy that transforms lives and enables us to see the potential in the lives of others afresh. The good news of the kingdom is the fruit of the abiding presence of the Spirit of the creator God in the wonder and diversity of creation. It is seen in the hearts of living disciples who make this available to others through their generous lives and words, their welcoming homes, their attitudes at work, above all their capacity to forgive.

SEEDS OF THE KINGDOM

The seeds of the kingdom, if we have eyes to see, are all around us. Such seeds bear fruit in more open lives, open to others and open to encountering our strange and ever new God. Our time and our work are a time of sowing: that's what we are called to get on with. It's not our job to worry about the harvest; Jesus didn't seem to in his ministry. He seems to have the patience, pragmatism and trust of a Galilean subsistence farmer. As long as some of the seeds of the kingdom bear fruit then the world will continue to know of the good news of our merciful God. God alone decides when the ultimate harvest is ready. And we entrust that to his merciful hands. But at present what we need are more sowers, not harvesters.

Mass text

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

As for me, in justice I shall behold your face; I shall be filled with the vision of your glory.

FIRST READING Isaiah 55:10-11

PSALM Psalm 64

RESPONSE **Some seed fell into rich soil and produced its crop.**

1. You care for the earth, give it water, you fill it with riches. Your river in heaven brims over to provide its grain. **R.**
2. And thus you provide for the earth; you drench its furrows, you level it, soften it with showers, you bless its growth. **R.**
3. You crown the year with your goodness. Abundance flows in your steps, in the pastures of the wilderness it flows. **R.**
4. The hills are girded with joy, the meadows covered with flocks, the valleys are decked with wheat. They shout for joy, yes, they sing. **R.**

SECOND READING Romans 8:18-23

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia! The seed is the word of God, Christ the sower; whoever finds this seed will remain for ever. Alleluia!

GOSPEL Matthew 13:1-23

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

The sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for her young: by your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God. Blessed are they who dwell in your house, for ever singing your praise.

Next Sunday's Readings:
Wisdom 12:13. 16-19
Romans 8:26-27
Matthew 13:24-43

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SUNDAY BULLETIN



SOWERS, NOT HARVESTERS

Jesus had a core message about reconciled life lived in the presence of the merciful Abba. His summary for this was "the kingdom of God". He did not leave volumes of theology or defined doctrine. Instead he modelled a way of living towards God and others, and passed on a series of short parables that are sometimes like riddles, sometimes mini-stories, sometimes moral tales and sometimes sayings of wisdom.

Unlike the rabbis he did not make his disciples learn his words off by heart. He gave them enormous freedom to interpret them. He seems to believe that if they have opened themselves to his and the Father's Spirit they will know what to say and do. He expects them to catch his vision of God and live it out. When they don't he looks back to the great prophet Isaiah who had a similar problem and arrived at a wise diagnosis. When he passed on the word of God which could bring healing and reconciliation there were those who didn't want to hear because it would demand their conversion of mind, change – and for some that was a step too far.

When Jesus teaches his followers how to pass on his message he uses the image from everyday farming of sowing seeds. Sowing seeds, then as now, depends on so many uncontrollable elements: soil and its fertility, water and drainage, relative sunshine and shade, and so on. Every farmer knows that different parcels of land will produce different yields. Sowing is a patient process and the sower works with the results that emerge in due course.

So the model of planting the kingdom of God and its prophetic message is the model of the patient sower, not the military general planning a campaign with carefully calculated logistics, or the sales manager with target numbers and pressurised salesmen and women. Jesus planted his words and acts of mercy and kindness in land that was often unpromising but by God's grace often yielded unexpected fruit. Evangelisation today does not need models of slick presentation, calculated success, or prosperity. The Church has always been hurt when it aimed at numerical success models and full churches, calculated by census. Indeed it has hurt others when it, at times, has imposed too tightly defined a version of its faith on them. Jesus sows patiently in hope. So should we.

Catching the kingdom



David McLoughlin is a teaching theologian who has spent nearly forty years helping to train Christian teachers, ministers and activists. In this series of reflections, he considers the Sunday readings.



12 JULY 2020

15TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

YEAR A

DIVINE OFFICE WEEK III