



# THE MESSENGER

The weekly review of the Parish of

*St Michael and All Angels*

Watford

**PASSION SUNDAY**

29 March 2020

**“The Church building is closed, but the Church family continues”**

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York have announced the suspension of public worship in all Churches. The Government has now also announced that all Places of Worship must close.

This means that there will be no more public worship at St Michael’s until further notice.

There is a message from Fr Geoff on the back page.

Did you remember to put your clocks forward one hour for BST last night?

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## **For your prayers this week:**

People stranded across the world and trying to get home

All those currently suffering from Covid-19

People struggling to cope with staying at home

People whose incomes and livelihoods are at risk

NHS workers and volunteers

Police, fire, ambulance and other emergency services

People who have lost friends and family members

People living in countries without good healthcare

Transport workers and others working in contact with the public

Children learning at home, and teachers working in school and at home

**The Ill and the Housebound:** Especially Christopher Bilson, Janet Chandler, Marion Craddock-Jones, Audrey Dixon, Cynthia Dixon, Claire Dunning, Fr Robert Featherstone, Jemima Hill, Peter Hinchey, Mary Kearns, Keith Levinson, Loretta Lynch, Craig McKay, Lisa Mills, Sylvia Obeng, Dorcas Ochola, Brian Rees, Michelle Rodford, Christina Simon, Adelaide Tonkin, Peter White; and all who care for them.

**The Departed:** Jean Bale; the souls of all who have died with Covid-19.

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**Collect**

Most merciful God, who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ delivered and saved the world:  
grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross we may triumph in the power of his victory;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

**FIRST READING Ezekiel 37.1–14**

A reading from the book of the prophet Ezekiel.

- <sup>1</sup> The hand of the LORD came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones.
- <sup>2</sup> He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry.
- <sup>3</sup> He said to me, ‘Mortal, can these bones live?’ I answered, ‘O Lord GOD, you know.’
- <sup>4</sup> Then he said to me, ‘Prophesy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD.
- <sup>5</sup> Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live.
- <sup>6</sup> I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the LORD.’
- <sup>7</sup> So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone.
- <sup>8</sup> I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them.
- <sup>9</sup> Then he said to me, ‘Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.’
- <sup>10</sup> I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.
- <sup>11</sup> Then he said to me, ‘Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, “Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.”
- <sup>12</sup> Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel.
- <sup>13</sup> And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people.
- <sup>14</sup> I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken and will act, says the LORD.’

## SECOND READING Romans 8.6–11

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

- 6 To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.
- 7 For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law – indeed it cannot,
- 8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.
- 9 But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.
- 10 But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.
- 11 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

## GOSPEL John 11.17-27, 38-45

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

- 17 When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days.
- 18 Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away,
- 19 and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother.
- 20 When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home.
- 21 Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.
- 22 But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.'
- 23 Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.'
- 24 Martha said to him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.'
- 25 Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live,
- 26 and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?'
- 27 She said to him, 'Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.'
- 38 Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it.
- 39 Jesus said, 'Take away the stone.' Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, 'Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days.'
- 40 Jesus said to her, 'Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?'
- 41 So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upwards and said, 'Father, I thank you for having heard me.
- 42 I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.'
- 43 When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!'
- 44 The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, and let him go.'
- 45 Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

Dear Friends,

At this most difficult time, there seems to be something depressing on the news every few minutes. If we are prepared to dig them out though, there are also inspiring stories of people rising to the challenge. I was on a “conference call” this week of people from all faiths and none, in our community, coming together to see how people in Watford can be helped through this. There are hot meals being delivered to vulnerable people, and several of our local restaurants are providing food free of charge. The Food Bank is still running at its five locations in Watford. Many, many people are selflessly offering their time and resources. This is a time when faith is tested, but is also a support. St Paul tells us that “Faith, Hope and Love, these three abide, but the greatest of them all is love”. A phrase that is always a help to me is “ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est”, roughly translated as “where there is fellowship and love, God is there”. I think this is a time when we will be able to see the presence of God in many people and places where we are not used to expecting it.

Stay safe

Love and prayers  
Fr Geoff

## **NOTICES**

**ELECTORAL ROLL REVISION**: This year’s revision commenced on Sunday 1st March and finishes on 1st April. If anyone would like their name added to the Roll, please get a form from Fr Geoff or Simon Fowle. If you have changed your email address or telephone number could you also inform us by email at [simon.fowle@ntlworld.com](mailto:simon.fowle@ntlworld.com) or phone on 01923 229624 please.

We are asked to put a lighted candle in our window at 7.00pm on Sunday 22nd, and Sundays following, as part of the National Call to Prayer

St Michael and All Angels PCC is a Registered Charity No 1132010