



THE MESSENGER

The weekly review of the Parish of

St Michael and All Angels

Watford

EASTER 6

Sunday 17 May 2020

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

As you are now all aware, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York have announced the suspension of public worship in all Churches. The Government has 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.

For your prayers this week:

People preparing for the birth of a child

Newly born children and their parents

Midwives and Maternity Nurses

Care home residents and staff

Carers for vulnerable people

People returning to work

School children, parents and staff

People on furlough

The business community

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

The Departed:

Collect

God our redeemer, you have delivered us from the power of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of your Son:
grant, that as by his death he has recalled us to life, so by his continual presence in us he may raise us to eternal joy;
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 Acts 17.22–31

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

- ²² Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, ‘Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way.
- ²³ For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, “To an unknown god.” What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you.
- ²⁴ The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands,
- ²⁵ nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things.
- ²⁶ From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live,
- ²⁷ so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him – though indeed he is not far from each one of us.
- ²⁸ For “In him we live and move and have our being”; as even some of your own poets have said, “For we too are his offspring.”
- ²⁹ Since we are God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals.
- ³⁰ While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent,
- ³¹ because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.’

SECOND READING I Peter 3.13–22

A reading from the first letter of Peter.

- ¹³ Who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good?
¹⁴ But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated,
¹⁵ but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defence to anyone who demands from you an account of the hope that is in you;
¹⁶ yet do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame.
¹⁷ For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil.
¹⁸ For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit,
¹⁹ in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison,
²⁰ who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water.
²¹ And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you – not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,
²² who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

GOSPEL John 14.15–21

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

- Jesus said to his disciples:
¹⁵ 'If you love me, you will keep my commandments.
¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you for ever.
¹⁷ This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.
¹⁸ I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you.
¹⁹ In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live.
²⁰ On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.
²¹ They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.'

Homily

Dear friends,

During my prayers this week, I read a short passage from an early Christian writing of the second century AD, talking about the relationship of Christians to the world around them. Christians don't wear different clothes, eat different food, or live in different houses, it says. It pictures the relationship of Christians to the world as being like the soul to the body. Christians do the same things as other people, but they do them with God in their hearts. They bring God into the world as its unseen, but nonetheless real and necessary, life-force. We are not better, not holier, not Godlier even, just bearers of God's presence in the world along with others.

Stay safe,

Love and prayers

Fr Geoff

NOTICES

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK ENDED YESTERDAY but although we are coping with very complicated circumstances, I wonder if St Michael's can still try to help them with their excellent work? I would be happy to receive cheques here (and would acknowledge receipt). Alternatively, to save posting cheques, if you would like to phone or email to let me know how much you would like to send, I will include the amount and am happy to be paid back later. I hope we shall be able to make a contribution as we have in past years. With best wishes

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