



THE MESSENGER

The weekly review of the Parish of

St Michael and All Angels

Watford

SUNDAY after ASCENSION/EASTER 7
Sunday 24 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:

The safety of care home residents and staff
Research into vaccines and treatments for COVID-19
School teachers, staff, pupils and parents
Wisdom in the decisions of world leaders
All those suffering from mental health issues in lockdown
NHS staff and patients in hospital and community
People with learning difficulties
Leaders of faith groups in Watford
Watford Town Centre Chaplaincy

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

O God the king of glory, you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven:
we beseech you, leave us not comfortless, but send your Holy Spirit to strengthen us and exalt us to the place where our Saviour Christ is gone before,
who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

FIRST READING Acts 1.6–14

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

- ⁶ When the apostles had come together, they asked him, ‘Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?’
- ⁷ He replied, ‘It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority.
- ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.’
- ⁹ When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.
- ¹⁰ While he was going and they were gazing up towards heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them.
- ¹¹ They said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up towards heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.’
- ¹² Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day’s journey away.
- ¹³ When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James.
- ¹⁴ All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

SECOND READING I Peter 4.12–14; 5.6–11

A reading from the first letter of Peter.

- ¹² Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.

¹³ But rejoice in so far as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed.

¹⁴ If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you.

⁶ Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time.

⁷ Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you.

⁸ Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour.

⁹ Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters throughout the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering.

¹⁰ And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you.

¹¹ To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

GOSPEL John 17.1-11

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

¹ Jesus looked up to heaven and said, 'Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you,

² since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him.

³ And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

⁴ I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do.

⁵ So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

⁶ I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word.

⁷ Now they know that everything you have given me is from you;

⁸ for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me.

⁹ I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours.

¹⁰ All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them.

¹¹ And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.'

Homily

Dear friends,

In our Gospel reading today, Jesus prays to the Father. One of the things he asks is that his followers may be protected, and that is something very poignant at the moment. When we read on a little, though, we learn that he wants them to be protected so that they may be one, as he is one with the Father. One of the great dangers of the present situation is that we can fall into division. One of the things we have learnt in the Coronavirus pandemic is that we are at our best when we are united and joined in common purpose. This is not something we can always make happen ourselves – we need the grace of God.

Stay safe,

Love and prayers

Fr Geoff

Watford Town Centre Chaplaincy need new volunteers from churches in Watford and the surrounding areas to join our experienced Street Angel / Chaplain team to be a positive, reassuring presence on the streets of Watford town centre as Watford gets back to work.

Please apply to join us if:

- You can volunteer at least 2 hours during the working week, or on Saturday
- You can walk, cycle, or drive into Watford town centre
- You have the support of your church leader and your household.

We will provide training and uniform for your safety.

Find out more and fill in either application form (Street Angel or Chaplain) at www.watfordtcc.org/volunteer and return it to office@watfordtcc.org

Please apply asap. Thank you.

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Watford Town Centre Chaplaincy is a registered charity no.1101281