



THE MESSENGER

The weekly review of the Parish of

St Michael and All Angels

Watford

PENTECOST
Sunday 31 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:

Children teachers and staff going back to school

Children teachers and staff staying at home

Teachers and children engaged in distance learning

Shops and businesses reopening and decisions on how to do so safely

All organisations looking at ways to restart activities

All organisations having to maintain closures

Police, ambulance, fire, paramedics and other emergency services

NHS and care home staff, patients and residents

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, who as at this time taught the hearts of your faithful people by sending to them the light of your Holy Spirit:
grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgement in all things and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort;
through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

FIRST READING Acts 2.1–21

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

- ¹ When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.
² And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.
³ Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them.
⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.
⁵ Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem.
⁶ And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each.
⁷ Amazed and astonished, they asked, 'Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?
⁸ And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language?
⁹ Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,
¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes,
¹¹ Cretans and Arabs – in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power.'
¹² All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, 'What does this mean?'
¹³ But others sneered and said, 'They are filled with new wine.'
¹⁴ But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, 'Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say.
¹⁵ Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning.
¹⁶ No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:
¹⁷ "In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.
¹⁸ Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.

- 19 And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood,
and fire, and smoky mist.
20 The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of
the Lord's great and glorious day.
21 Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

SECOND READING I Corinthians 12.3b–13

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians.

- 3 No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit.
4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit;
5 and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord;
6 and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them
in everyone.
7 To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.
8 To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the
utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit,
9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit,
10 to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the
discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the
interpretation of tongues.
11 All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one
individually just as the Spirit chooses.
12 For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the
body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.
13 For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body – Jews or Greeks, slaves
or free – and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

GOSPEL John 20.19–23

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

- 19 It was evening on the first day of the week, and the doors of the
house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews.
Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.'
20 After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the
disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.
21 Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent
me, so I send you.'
22 When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them,
'Receive the Holy Spirit.
23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the
sins of any, they are retained.'

Homily

Dear friends,

Today is Pentecost, or Whitsunday, when we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes I think that the Holy Spirit is the person of the Trinity we find hardest to grasp. Of course, this is just how the Bible describes the Spirit, as something like the wind blowing, or a flame burning – not something you can grasp or hold on to. The nearest I can say is that the Holy Spirit is what makes the Gospel of Jesus active in our lives. We can know a lot about the Gospel, know the words, but it is the Holy Spirit that makes the Gospel an active force. A book by Richard Rohr is called “Eager to Love”, and that to me is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is what makes us eager to love.

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