



THE MESSENGER

The weekly review of the Parish of

St Michael and All Angels

Watford

TRINITY 4
Sunday 5 July 2020

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

St Michael’s Church is now open for private prayer on Wednesdays, 10.00am – 12.00 noon, and Sundays 10.15am – 12.15am. Hygiene and social distancing procedures are in operation for your protection. All very welcome.

If you would like to donate to St Michael’s during the pandemic, there is a JustGiving page at <https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/stmichaelandallangels>

There is a message about church services and a Homily from Fr Geoff on the back page.

For your prayers this week:

The people of Leicester, and other places facing renewed lockdown
People living in countries where COVID-19 is on the rise
Health services and government in those countries
The people of Hong Kong
Children who have lost schooling during the lockdown
Teachers and school staff in reopening schools
The schools in our parish and local area
Wisdom in restarting the economy
Workers in public-facing roles

The Ill and the Housebound: Especially Lorna Barson, 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, Catherine Stone, Adelaide Tonkin, Peter White; and all who care for them.

The Departed:

Collect

O God, the protector of all who trust in you, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy:

increase and multiply upon us your mercy; that with you as our ruler and guide we may so pass through things temporal that we lose not our hold on things eternal; grant this, heavenly Father, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

FIRST READING Genesis 24.34–38, 42–49, 58–67

A reading from the book of Genesis.

The servant whom Abraham had sent said to Laban:

34 'I am Abraham's servant.

35 The LORD has greatly blessed my master, and he has become wealthy; he has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male and female slaves, camels and donkeys.

36 And Sarah my master's wife bore a son to my master when she was old; and he has given him all that he has.

37 My master made me swear, saying, "You shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I live;

38 but you shall go to my father's house, to my kindred, and get a wife for my son."

42 I came today to the spring, and said, "O LORD, the God of my master Abraham, if now you will only make successful the way I am going!

43 I am standing here by the spring of water; let the young woman who comes out to draw, to whom I shall say, 'Please give me a little water from your jar to drink,'

44 and who will say to me, 'Drink, and I will draw for your camels also' – let her be the woman whom the LORD has appointed for my master's son."

45 Before I had finished speaking in my heart, there was Rebekah coming out with her water jar on her shoulder; and she went down to the spring, and drew. I said to her, "Please let me drink."

46 She quickly let down her jar from her shoulder, and said, "Drink, and I will also water your camels." So I drank, and she also watered the camels.

47 Then I asked her, "Whose daughter are you?" She said, "The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bore to him." So I put the ring on her nose, and the bracelets on her arms.

48 Then I bowed my head and worshipped the LORD, and blessed the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me by the right way to obtain the daughter of my master's kinsman for his son.

49 Now then, if you will deal loyally and truly with my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, so that I may turn either to the right hand or to the left.'

58 And they called Rebekah, and said to her, 'Will you go with this man?' She said, 'I will.'

59 So they sent away their sister Rebekah and her nurse along with Abraham's servant and his men.

60 And they blessed Rebekah and said to her, 'May you, our sister, become thousands of myriads; may your offspring gain possession of the gates of their foes.'

61 Then Rebekah and her maids rose up, mounted the camels, and followed the man; thus the servant took Rebekah, and went his way.

62 Now Isaac had come from Beer-lahai-roi, and was settled in the Negeb.

63 Isaac went out in the evening to walk in the field; and looking up, he saw camels coming.
64 And Rebekah looked up, and when she saw Isaac, she slipped quickly from the camel,
65 and said to the servant, 'Who is the man over there, walking in the field to meet us?'
The servant said, 'It is my master.' So she took her veil and covered herself.
66 And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done.
67 Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent. He took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

SECOND READING Romans 7.15–25a

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

15 I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.
16 Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good.
17 But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me.
18 For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it.
19 For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do.
20 Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me.
21 So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand.
22 For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self,
23 but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.
24 Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?
25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

GOSPEL Matthew 11.16–19, 25–30

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

At that time Jesus said,
16 'To what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the market-places and calling to one another,
17 "We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn."
18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, "He has a demon";
19 the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, "Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax-collectors and sinners!" Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.
25 I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants;
26 yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.
27 All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.
28 Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.
29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.
30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'

Homily

“I am just a poor boy though my story's seldom told I have squandered my resistance for a pocketful of mumbles, /Such are promises, all lies and jest, /Still a man hears what he wants to hear /And disregards the rest.” Lines from “The Boxer” by Simon and Garfunkel. It chimes for me with the words of Jesus in our Gospel. So often we hear what we want to hear, see what we want to see, and disregard the rest. This sometimes means that we ignore the teachings of Jesus because we don't want to hear them. They are too difficult or too demanding, we think. Best to tailor the Gospel to support what we want to do. Jesus tells us that if we take on his burden, the burden of his teachings, it is a light burden, and actually encourages and builds us up.

Love and prayers

Fr Geoff

Church Services

You will have heard that the Government is allowing people to meet for Church services from the 4th July. Guidance from the Church came on Tuesday of this week. This is definitely a ‘can’ not a ‘must’, and we are not quite ready yet to open St Michael's for public worship. We need to look carefully at the building, its layout, and the way in which worship will take place, so that it is as safe as possible. Please be patient and bear with us! Services will continue to be live streamed even when we are able to meet, as not everyone will be able to join in physically.