



THE MESSENGER

The weekly review of the Parish of

St Michael and All Angels

Watford

TRINITY 5

Sunday 12 July 2020

Welcome back to St Michael's for the first public service since lockdown. This will be a said Eucharist at 9.30am and there will be no singing. There will be a limit of 40 people, and hygiene, social distancing, and track and trace will be in place, but most importantly, we are here!

The service will also be live-streamed on the YouTube channel "Geoffrey Calvert" for those who are unable to attend physically.

Following the service, St Michael's will remain open for private prayer until 12.00 noon.

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

For your prayers this week:

People working in the hospitality industry

People looking to move home

People working in the property industry

Our museums, galleries, and historic sites

People working in track and trace

The economy of our country and the world economy

People living in countries and areas where coronavirus is increasing

People self isolating, quarantining and shielding

Churches reopening for worship, and planning to reopen

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

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified:
hear our prayer which we offer for all your faithful people, that in their vocation and ministry they may serve you in holiness and truth to the glory of your name;
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

FIRST READING Genesis 25.19–34

A reading from the book of Genesis.

- 19 These are the descendants of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham was the father of Isaac,
20 and Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah, daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan-aram, sister of Laban the Aramean.
21 Isaac prayed to the LORD for his wife, because she was barren; and the LORD granted his prayer, and his wife Rebekah conceived.
22 The children struggled together within her; and she said, 'If it is to be this way, why do I live?' So she went to inquire of the LORD.
23 And the LORD said to her, 'Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples born of you shall be divided; the one shall be stronger than the other, the elder shall serve the younger.'
24 When her time to give birth was at hand, there were twins in her womb.
25 The first came out red, all his body like a hairy mantle; so they named him Esau.
26 Afterwards his brother came out, with his hand gripping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them.
27 When the boys grew up, Esau was a skilful hunter, a man of the field, while Jacob was a quiet man, living in tents.
28 Isaac loved Esau, because he was fond of game; but Rebekah loved Jacob.
29 Once when Jacob was cooking a stew, Esau came in from the field, and he was famished.
30 Esau said to Jacob, 'Let me eat some of that red stuff, for I am famished!' (Therefore he was called Edom.)
31 Jacob said, 'First sell me your birthright.'
32 Esau said, 'I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?'
33 Jacob said, 'Swear to me first.' So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob.
34 Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew, and he ate and drank, and rose and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

SECOND READING Romans 8.1–11

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

- 1 There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.
3 For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh,

4 so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according
to the flesh but according to the Spirit.
5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but
those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.
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 Matthew 13.1–9, 18–23

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

1 Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the lake.
2 Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the
whole crowd stood on the beach.
3 And he told them many things in parables, saying: 'Listen! A sower went out to sow.
4 And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up.
5 Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang
up quickly, since they had no depth of soil.
6 But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered
away.
7 Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them.
8 Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty,
some thirty.
9 Let anyone with ears listen!
18 Hear then the parable of the sower.
19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one
comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path.
20 As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and
immediately receives it with joy;
21 yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or
persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away.
22 As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares
of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing.
23 But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and
understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another
sixty, and in another thirty.'

Homily

Today we are back in Church! What we do not know is what the “new normal” will be for Church life, as we can’t see into the future. However much we plan as a Church, the future depends on the people “out there”, the future generations, and how they see the Church and the World. There is evidence that more people have engaged with online worship during the lockdown than actually came to Church before. There is evidence that many more people prayed, or engaged in some form of religious activity. How this will all translate into future Church life is unknowable. The Gospel today is the parable of the sower. What we can do now as the Church is sow seeds and trust in God for their nurture.

Love and prayers
Fr Geoff

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.

HISTORIC CHURCHES BIKE & HIKE 2020

The Beds & Herts Historic Churches Trustees have told me that this year’s event will take place on Saturday 12 September, but in modified form as some churches may not be open. However, St Michael’s should be able to open on that day for the event.

At this stage, I should like to know if there is anyone who wishes to cycle or hike or use any other form of transport to visit churches and chapels. I have yet to receive sponsorship forms of any kind.

I shall write further in due course. In the meantime, I hope and pray that all of you are well.

Stay safe
Robert Bilson

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>