



THE MESSENGER

The weekly review of the Parish of

St Michael and All Angels

Watford

TRINITY 7

Sunday 26 July 2020

Welcome back to St Michael's. At 9.30am there is a eucharist with congregation in Church, music but 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 new YouTube channel "St Michaels Church Watford" 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:

The Church: The Bishops of the Anglican Communion who would have been at the Lambeth Conference.

The Parish of St Mary Ponsbourne in our Diocese.

The work of the Church of North India against human trafficking.

The World: The nations of Peru and Benin commemorating independence.

The prevention of human trafficking.

People living in counties where coronavirus is increasing.

The Community and Parish: Business leader and communities in Watford.

Our members not able to be in Church due to shielding, quarantine or self-isolation.

Our children and young people.

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

Lord of all power and might, the author and giver of all good things:
graft in our hearts the love of your name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all
goodness, and of your great mercy keep us in the same;
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 Genesis 29.15–28

A reading from the book of Genesis.

- 15 Laban said to Jacob, 'Because you are my kinsman, should you therefore serve me for
nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?'
- 16 Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the
younger was Rachel.
- 17 Leah's eyes were lovely, and Rachel was graceful and beautiful.
- 18 Jacob loved Rachel; so he said, 'I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter
Rachel.'
- 19 Laban said, 'It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to any other
man; stay with me.'
- 20 So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because
of the love he had for her.
- 21 Then Jacob said to Laban, 'Give me my wife that I may go in to her, for my time is
completed.'
- 22 So Laban gathered together all the people of the place, and made a feast.
- 23 But in the evening he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob; and he went in
to her.
- 24 (Laban gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah to be her maid.)
- 25 When morning came, it was Leah! And Jacob said to Laban, 'What is this you have
done to me? Did I not serve with you for Rachel? Why then have you deceived me?'
- 26 Laban said, 'This is not done in our country – giving the younger before the firstborn.
- 27 Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also in return for serving
me another seven years.'
- 28 Jacob did so, and completed her week; then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel as a
wife.

SECOND READING Romans 8.26–39

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

- 26 The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but
that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words.
- 27 And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the
Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.
- 28 We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are
called according to his purpose.

29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his
Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family.
30 And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also
justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.
31 What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us?
32 He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him
also give us everything else?
33 Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.
34 Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the
right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us.
35 Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or
persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?
36 As it is written, 'For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as
sheep to be slaughtered.'
37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.
38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things
present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height,
39 nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of
God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

GOSPEL Matthew 13.31–33, 44–52

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

31 Jesus put before the crowd another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard
seed that someone took and sowed in his field;
32 it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and
becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.'
33 He told them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took
and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.
34 The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid;
then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.
35 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls;
36 on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.
37 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish
of every kind;
38 when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw
out the bad.
39 So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from
the righteous
40 and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of
teeth.
41 Have you understood all this?' They answered, 'Yes.'
42 And he said to them, 'Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of
heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and
what is old.'

Homily

Sometimes people say to me that they don't like organised religion. I would invite such people to come and look at my study, which is a great example of disorganised religion! I think that organised religion of some form is essential to enable the word of truth to be passed on, not just in words, but in lives lived out. Today's parables of the Kingdom just remind us that although organised religion is important, it is not the same as the kingdom. God works in all sorts of ways, hidden and open, both within and outside the bounds of our religious institutions. The important thing is to perceive the work of God wherever it is happening, and encourage and support it with the resources (mainly people) of our Church.

Love and prayers
Fr Geoff

St Michael's Church is now open for private prayer on Wednesdays, 10.00am – 12.00 noon, and Sundays 10.45am – 12.15pm. 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>

Website: <http://www.stmichaels-watford.org.uk>
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