



THE MESSENGER

The weekly review of the Parish of

St Michael and All Angels

Watford

TRINITY 8

Sunday 2 August 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: Mental Health Chaplains.

The Mission to Seafarers.

Church Army's Xplore programme for young people.

The World: The people of Niger, Burkina Faso, Jamaica and Cot d'Ivoire on their Independence days.

People vulnerable to renewed outbreaks of COVID-19.

People facing unemployment.

The Community and Parish: Plans for Celebration 2020 online.

The people of Watford Football Club.

Watford General Hospital.

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 Lord and everlasting God, we beseech you to direct, sanctify and govern both our hearts and bodies in the ways of your laws and the works of your commandments; that through your most mighty protection, both here and ever, we may be preserved in body and soul; 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 32.22–31

A reading from the book of Genesis.

²² Jacob got up, took his two wives, his two maids, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok.

²³ He took them and sent them across the stream, and likewise everything that he had.

²⁴ Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until daybreak.

²⁵ When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he struck him on the hip socket; and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him.

²⁶ Then he said, 'Let me go, for the day is breaking.' But Jacob said, 'I will not let you go, unless you bless me.'

²⁷ So he said to him, 'What is your name?' And he said, 'Jacob.'

²⁸ Then the man said, 'You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with humans, and have prevailed.'

²⁹ Then Jacob asked him, 'Please tell me your name.' But he said, 'Why is it that you ask my name?' And there he blessed him.

³⁰ So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, 'For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved.'

³¹ The sun rose upon him as he passed Penuel, limping because of his hip.

SECOND READING Romans 9.1–5

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

- ¹ I am speaking the truth in Christ. I am not lying; my conscience confirms it by the Holy Spirit.
- ² I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart.
- ³ For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people, my kindred according to the flesh.
- ⁴ They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises;
- ⁵ to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

GOSPEL Matthew 14.13–21

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

- ¹³ When Jesus heard that Herod had beheaded John the Baptist, he withdrew in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns.
- ¹⁴ When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick.
- ¹⁵ When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, ‘This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.’
- ¹⁶ Jesus said to them, ‘They need not go away; you give them something to eat.’
- ¹⁷ They replied, ‘We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.’
- ¹⁸ And he said, ‘Bring them here to me.’
- ¹⁹ Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds.
- ²⁰ And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full.
- ²¹ And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Homily

The account of the Feeding of the Five Thousand reads as though it was unplanned. Neither the situation, nor Jesus' response to it, seem to have been planned, although I'm sure many people would disagree with me on this. In fact, many of Jesus encounters with people suggest that he was able to react to unplanned situations, and bring a graced response of healing, peace and fulfilment. Just at the moment, the future seems very uncertain, and we don't know what the "new normal" will look like, nor how long it will take to come into being. Taking a leaf from Jesus, we need to try to bring the grace of Jesus into situations as they come along, even if they are not ones we would have planned, expected, or hoped for.

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.

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>
St Michael and All Angels PCC is a Registered Charity No 1132010