



# THE MESSENGER

The weekly review of the Parish of

*St Michael and All Angels*

Watford

TRINITY 11

Sunday 23 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.

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## **For your prayers this week:**

- The Church:** The Parish of Wilbury (Hitchin Deanery) in our Diocese.  
The Church of the Province of South East Asia, Melter Tais its Archbishop and all its people.  
The Anglican Church of Malawi and its work in education.
- The World:** Young people working out their future in the world of work, further and higher education.  
Young people preparing to return to School.  
Staff in educational establishments coping with current issues, and preparing for future intakes.
- The Community and Parish:** Preparations for Celebration 2020.  
All those who are joining us online.  
Our Church choir and musicians.
- 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, Catherine Stone, Adelaide Tonkin, Peter White; and all who care for them.

## **The Departed:**

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**COLLECT**

O God, you declare your almighty power most chiefly in showing mercy and pity; mercifully grant to us such a measure of your grace, that we, running the way of your commandments, may receive your gracious promises, and be made partakers of your heavenly treasure; 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 Exodus 1.8 – 2.10**

A reading from the book of Exodus.

- 8 A new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph.  
9 He said to his people, 'Look, the Israelite people are more numerous and more powerful than we.  
10 Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, or they will increase and, in the event of war, join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land.'  
11 Therefore they set taskmasters over them to oppress them with forced labour. They built supply cities, Pithom and Rameses, for Pharaoh.  
12 But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread, so that the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites.  
13 The Egyptians became ruthless in imposing tasks on the Israelites,  
14 and made their lives bitter with hard service in mortar and brick and in every kind of field labour. They were ruthless in all the tasks that they imposed on them.  
15 The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah,  
16 'When you act as midwives to the Hebrew women, and see them on the birthstool, if it is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, she shall live.'  
17 But the midwives feared God; they did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but they let the boys live.  
18 So the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and said to them, 'Why have you done this, and allowed the boys to live?'  
19 The midwives said to Pharaoh, 'Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them.'  
20 So God dealt well with the midwives; and the people multiplied and became very strong.  
21 And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families.  
22 Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, 'Every boy that is born to the Hebrews you shall throw into the Nile, but you shall let every girl live.'  
1 Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman.  
2 The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him three months.  
3 When she could hide him no longer she got a papyrus basket for him, and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river.  
4 His sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen to him.  
5 The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her attendants walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to bring it.

- 6 When she opened it, she saw the child. He was crying, and she took pity on him, ‘This must be one of the Hebrews’ children,’ she said.
- 7 Then his sister said to Pharaoh’s daughter, ‘Shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?’
- 8 Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, ‘Yes.’ So the girl went and called the child’s mother.
- 9 Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, ‘Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages.’ So the woman took the child and nursed it.
- 10 When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh’s daughter, and she took him as her son. She named him Moses, ‘because,’ she said, ‘I drew him out of the water.’

## **SECOND READING Romans 12.1–8**

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

- 1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.
- 2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect.
- 3 For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgement, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.
- 4 For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function,
- 5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another.
- 6 We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith;
- 7 ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching;
- 8 the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

## **GOSPEL Matthew 16.13–20**

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

- 13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, ‘Who do people say that the Son of Man is?’
- 14 And they said, ‘Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.’
- 15 He said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’
- 16 Simon Peter answered, ‘You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.’
- 17 And Jesus answered him, ‘Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven.
- 18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.
- 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.’
- 20 Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

## **Homily**

Peter's Confession at Caesarea Philippi is one of the turning points of the Gospel story. The crowds have been trying to make sense of Jesus, using what they already believe about how God is planning to intervene in his world. Peter makes a leap of intuition, based on his knowledge of Jesus himself, which Jesus then confirms as a revelation from God. Our faith is like that. We can proceed by logical steps, by common sense, using our reason. Sometimes, however, we need to make that intuitive leap of faith, and be open to revelation from outside of ourselves. We need both of these in our lives – to seek faith through understanding; to await revelation and reflect upon it.

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.

**PLEASE PRAY FOR BRIDGET RUSSELL**, who will be licensed as a Reader on Sunday 6th September, and will be exercising her reader ministry with us here at St Michael's. I am very pleased and excited by this, and I am sure the loving family of St Michael's will enfold her as she begins lay ministry here.

**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>

## **BIKE & HIKE 2020**

In view of the peculiar circumstances this year with the possibility of the Open Day 12 September being cancelled if the Government so decides, I propose that I be sponsored as Church representative for the work I am doing anyway in processing this year's appeal.

If you wish to sponsor me, you can see me in church or telephone me on 01923 227276. In either situation, I will take particulars and add them to the sponsorship form to be retained at home for safety reasons.

If anyone comes forward to cycle or hike, I will pass on the appropriate documentation.

Thanks. Robert Bilson

**CELEBRATION 2020**, our Multicultural Festival, will be taking place on-line, with contributions from Watford's Faiths and Cultures. It will be on the Bank Holiday weekend, 29th – 31st August, more details to follow.