



THE MESSENGER

The weekly review of the Parish of

St Michael and All Angels

Watford

TRINITY 14

Sunday 13 September 2020

Welcome back to St Michael's. At 9.30am there is a eucharist with congregation in Church, music but no congregational 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 our YouTube channel "St Michaels Church Watford" for those who are unable to attend physically.

After 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 Parish of Streatley (Luton Deanery) in our Diocese.
The Anglican Church of South America, Gregory Venables its Presiding Bishop, and all its people.
The Church's work with Young People.

The World: Family gatherings affected by COVID-19 restrictions.
The people of Belarus.
Arts venues struggling to survive.

The Community and Parish: Our PCC members.
Our Ministry Team.

Our learning how to be Church under coronavirus restrictions.

The Ill and the Housebound: Especially Christopher Bilson, Janet Chandler, Audrey Dixon, Cynthia Dixon, Claire Dunning, Fr Robert Featherstone, Jemima Hill, Peter Hinchey, Blossom Hutchinson, 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 God, whose only Son has opened for us a new and living way into your presence: give us pure hearts and steadfast wills to worship you in spirit and in truth; 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 14.19–31

A reading from the book of Exodus.

- ¹⁹ The angel of God who was going before the Israelite army moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and took its place behind them.
- ²⁰ It came between the army of Egypt and the army of Israel. And so the cloud was there with the darkness, and it lit up the night; one did not come near the other all night.
- ²¹ Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land; and the waters were divided.
- ²² The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.
- ²³ The Egyptians pursued, and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and chariot drivers.
- ²⁴ At the morning watch the LORD in the pillar of fire and cloud looked down upon the Egyptian army, and threw the Egyptian army into panic.
- ²⁵ He clogged their chariot wheels so that they turned with difficulty. The Egyptians said, 'Let us flee from the Israelites, for the LORD is fighting for them against Egypt.'
- ²⁶ Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers.'
- ²⁷ So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth. As the Egyptians fled before it, the LORD tossed the Egyptians into the sea.
- ²⁸ The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained.
- ²⁹ But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.
- ³⁰ Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore.
- ³¹ Israel saw the great work that the LORD did against the Egyptians. So the people feared the LORD and believed in the LORD and in his servant Moses.

SECOND READING Romans 14.1–12

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

- ¹ Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarrelling over opinions.
- ² Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables.
- ³ Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgement on those who eat; for God has welcomed them.

- 4 Who are you to pass judgement on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.
- 5 Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds.
- 6 Those who observe the day, observe it in honour of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honour of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honour of the Lord and give thanks to God.
- 7 We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves.
- 8 If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's.
- 9 For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.
- 10 Why do you pass judgement on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgement seat of God.
- 11 For it is written, 'As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God.'
- 12 So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

GOSPEL Matthew 18.21–35

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

- 21 Peter came and said to Jesus, 'Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?'
- 22 Jesus said to him, 'Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.
- 23 For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves.
- 24 When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him;
- 25 and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made.
- 26 So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything."
- 27 And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt.
- 28 But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow-slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, "Pay what you owe."
- 29 Then his fellow-slave fell down and pleaded with him, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you."
- 30 But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt.
- 31 When his fellow-slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place.
- 32 Then his lord summoned him and said to him, "You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me.
- 33 Should you not have had mercy on your fellow-slave, as I had mercy on you?"
- 34 And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt.
- 35 So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.'

Homily

Forgiveness is at the heart of the Gospel. Jesus teaches us that the way to learn how to forgive from the heart is to recognise how much we ourselves need to be forgiven. This is why the Church encourages us to confess our sins, and ask for forgiveness. In the Eucharist, the Priest cannot forgive sins, only God can do that, but the Priest gives absolution, knowing that if the person is truly penitent, God forgives. This is seen as a vital precursor to the rest of the service. We need to unburden ourselves as far as we can in order to receive the grace of word and sacrament. “Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.”

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