



THE MESSENGER

The weekly review of the Parish of

St Michael and All Angels

Watford

TRINITY 15

Sunday 20 September 2020

Welcome back to St Michael's. At 9.30am there is a Parish 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 All Saints Croxley Green in our Diocese.
The Province of ECUSA in South Sudan, Justin Badi Arama its Archbishop and all its people.
All those working for World Peace.

The World: Everyone facing the prospect of unemployment.
All those who are struggling with self-isolation, quarantine and shielding.
Everyone involved in the arts and cultural activities.

The Community and Parish: The schools in our Parish, their students, parents, and staff.
Our GP's, their surgeries, and NHS staff working in the community.
Members of our Church who are shielding or self-isolating.

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

God, who in generous mercy sent the Holy Spirit upon your Church in the burning fire of your love:

grant that your people may be fervent in the fellowship of the gospel that, always abiding in you, they may be found steadfast in faith and active in service;

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 16.2–15

A reading from the book of Exodus.

- 2 The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness.
- 3 The Israelites said to them, 'If only we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.'
- 4 Then the LORD said to Moses, 'I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not.
- 5 On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather on other days.'
- 6 So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, 'In the evening you shall know that it was the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt,
- 7 and in the morning you shall see the glory of the LORD, because he has heard your complaining against the LORD. For what are we, that you complain against us?'
- 8 And Moses said, 'When the LORD gives you meat to eat in the evening and your fill of bread in the morning, because the LORD has heard the complaining that you utter against him – what are we? Your complaining is not against us but against the LORD.'
- 9 Then Moses said to Aaron, 'Say to the whole congregation of the Israelites, "Draw near to the LORD, for he has heard your complaining."'
- 10 And as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the Israelites, they looked towards the wilderness, and the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud.
- 11 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,
- 12 'I have heard the complaining of the Israelites; say to them, "At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread; then you shall know that I am the LORD your God."'
- 13 In the evening quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp.
- 14 When the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground.
- 15 When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, 'What is it?' For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, 'It is the bread that the LORD has given you to eat.'

SECOND READING Philipians 1.21–30

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Philipians.

21 For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain.
22 If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labour for me; and I do not know which I prefer.
23 I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better;
24 but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you.
25 Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith,
26 so that I may share abundantly in your boasting in Christ Jesus when I come to you again.
27 Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel,
28 and are in no way intimidated by your opponents. For them this is evidence of their destruction, but of your salvation. And this is God's doing.
29 For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well –
30 since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

GOSPEL Matthew 20.1–16

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew. Jesus said to his disciples:

1 'The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard.
2 After agreeing with the labourers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard.
3 When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the market-place;
4 and he said to them, "You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right." So they went.
5 When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same.
6 And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, "Why are you standing here idle all day?"
7 They said to him, "Because no one has hired us." He said to them, "You also go into the vineyard."
8 When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, "Call the labourers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first."
9 When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage.
10 Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage.
11 And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner,
12 saying, "These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat."
13 But he replied to one of them, "Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage?
14 Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you.
15 Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?"
16 So the last will be first, and the first will be last.'

HOMILY

As in this parable, people often find that their work is not just a means of earning money, it is something which gives them a feeling of self-worth. For someone else to be paid more for the same work can make people feel that they are not being sufficiently valued. In our society, the problem comes when people want to work but are unable to. The Church needs to remind people that although gaining self-esteem through work is a good thing, the negative of it does not follow – being out of work doesn't make us useless people. God values us for who we are, not what our job is.

Love and prayers

Fr Geoff

NEXT WEEK, on Sunday 27th September, at our 9.30am Parish Eucharist, we welcome Bridget Russell, who has been licensed to our Parish as a Reader, and there will be a short liturgy inaugurating her ministry here.

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>

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