



ST TERESA'S

Newsletter

15th November 2020

My dear parishioners

The good news this week is that we might finally have a coronavirus vaccine. Of course, we must not raise our hopes too much but the signs are very positive. Until then we just need to accept the restrictions of this second lockdown. It is of course very upsetting that we cannot have public masses but as Cardinal Nichols reminds us all: 'It is important that we, as responsible citizens, observe these Regulations, which have the force of law: *"Remind them to be obedient to the officials in authority; to be ready to do good at every opportunity"* Titus 3:1. We do this in solidarity with so many others on whom are being imposed restrictions which impact severely on their lives and livelihoods.'

I am very pleased to tell you that our church will open for private prayer every Wednesday from 10.00am-11.00am until the end of the lockdown. My grateful thanks to Deacon Sean and his team of stewards for making this possible.



This Sunday is the 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time. As I said last week we are coming to the end of the Liturgical Year and the readings are often seen as warnings about the end times and being prepared for the coming of Christ. The gospel reading for this Sunday is the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25: 14-30). I think this is a well-known parable. The master goes away on a long journey and entrusts his wealth

to his servants. To one servant he gives five talents, to the second two talents and to the third one talent. A talent was in fact an extremely valuable ancient coin so each servant is actually given a lot of money. They are supposed to take good care of the master's resources and earn a profit. The first two servants, entrusted with the most money, invest it and double the money entrusted to them. The third servant who is a bit fearful and negligent goes away and hides it in the ground. When the master returns, the first two servants are praised and rewarded because they have taken care of what was entrusted to them. They made a big profit for the master. They are both called 'good and faithful servants' and are invited to join in the master's happiness. But the third servant is punished because he did nothing with what he received. He hid it in the ground.

As we know by now, there are many ways of understanding a parable. For sure the parable is not about making a fortune! Jesus is telling this story to teach us something important, to make a point. The standard reading of this story is that the talents represent all the personal gifts, abilities and qualities that God has given to each one of us that he expects us to 'spend' or to 'use' wisely. We can all spend some time reflecting on the gifts, qualities and abilities that we have. Do we use them for the benefit of others? We all possess so many gifts and qualities- cooking, baking, driving, gardening, listening, helping, wisdom, giving good advice. I can't mention them all here but it can be helpful to write down all our gifts and talents and then to really reflect on

how we can use them for others. We are all challenged to find ways in which we will be 'good and faithful servants' because we will have taken care of the gifts and talents entrusted to us and used them wisely and creatively.

However, we can also understand this parable on a different level. I love the explanation of Pope Francis. He explains the talents as the precious inheritance that the Lord entrusts to each one of us. What is that inheritance? Belonging to Christ, His love and his grace, faith, His Word, the Eucharist, His Forgiveness, our Baptism- all the precious treasures which the Lord has given to us. I think the message here is not to be like the third servant – not to hide our faith and our belonging to Christ, not to bury the Word of God, but to allow our faith and all that it entails to be present and alive in our life, in our relationships, in all the situations in which we find ourselves. The love and the mercy that we ourselves have received from the Lord- that needs to radiate out to others.



Pope Francis says something so beautiful. 'Jesus does not ask us to preserve his grace in a safe. Jesus does not ask this! He wants us to use it for the benefit of others, and that's how it grows. It is as if he tells us, "Here is my mercy, my tenderness, my forgiveness; take it and use it." And what have we done? Whom have we 'infected' with our faith? How many have we encouraged with our hope? How much love have we shared?'

I think this is the great challenge for us today, especially during this pandemic and the lockdown. We may not be able to visit our family, our friends, our neighbours as before but we can still pray for them, phone them, encourage them with kind and gentle words. We can still try to repair broken relationships by offering our love and mercy, the same love and mercy that we ourselves have received from the Lord. We can still extend a hand of love and friendship to others.

The third servant hid his treasure. Let us be grateful for the beautiful treasure that has been entrusted to us. Let us not be negligent and fearful like the third servant. Let us ask the Lord to show us how to be creative and use our treasure in order to spread the love and joy of the Lord, so that others may find this treasure too.

The day will come when each one of us will take our last breath. We know that- we don't know when or how, but we know it will come. And God will embrace us with his loving and gentle hands. And all our treasure- our gifts and talents that we have used to benefit others, the love that we have shared with others, the kindness we have extended to others, the forgiveness we have offered, the faith we had in God, our beautiful treasure that makes us who we are, will be taken up in that warm embrace and we will hear God call us by name and whisper, "Well done, good and faithful servant. Come and see the place that I have made for you."

Please be sure that I continue to remember all of you in my daily prayers and when I say my mass. Stay safe

Fr Lijo

*Well done,
good and
faithful
servant. Come
and join in your
Master's
happiness*

Opening of the Church for Private Prayer: The Church will be open every Wednesday morning from 10.00am-11.00am for private prayer. If you feel able to, please do come and spend some time with the Lord. Very strict safety measures continue to be in place.



CAFOD Harvest Family Fast Day Appeal raised via our parish envelope collection this year was £325.00. Additionally, due to the current restrictions, many parishioners donated directly to Cafod via the official website. Our sincere thanks go to everyone who responded to this year's appeal using either method, for such remarkable generosity at this difficult time.

Thank you so much also for your very generous contribution to our **Missio collection** on 25th October for World Mission Sunday. We raised the wonderful total of £145.00. Missio is the special charity of Pope Francis and the money will be used to help support missionaries who work alongside communities that are poor or in need.

Princes Risborough Food Cupboard: Thank you all so much for your generous donations. Donations may be made to St Mary's Church Bell Tower, 10.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. Wednesdays and Fridays, or in the trolley at the entrance to Tesco's at any time they're open.

Things we could do with more of: Tins of baked beans, Tins of sweetcorn, Tins of other vegetables, Tins of kidney beans etc. (or similar pulses), Tins of soup, Tins of meat, Meat pies (tins), Packets of rice, Tins of fruit, Tins or cartons of custard, Long-life dairy milk (UHT), Packets of cereal, Jars or packets of coffee, Jars of jam



Things we have plenty of, so don't need any more at the moment: Tins of potatoes, Tins of peas, Packets of dried pasta, Egg boxes (empty)



Waiting in Joyful Hope: Would you appreciate the opportunity to prepare to celebrate Christmas through shared reflection on the readings for each Sunday in Advent? There will be a parish Zoom group meeting for a maximum of an hour from 7.30pm on Wednesdays 25 November, 2, 9 and 16 December. Email Liz Clark on liz.clark4@btoopenworld.com to join the group

Online Marriage Support: Is your marriage under stress? SmartLoving BreakThrough can help! Identify your conflict triggers, learn strategies to de-escalate an argument and find constructive ways to re-establish connection. Available anywhere, anytime through our online platform, the course is completely private and doesn't require your spouse to participate. And it's subsidized by a generous UK donor. Restore hope for your relationship now. Visit: www.smartloving.org/bto-uk

