

NEWSLETTER 25th October 2020

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Join our Facebook group: St Teresa's Parish Community Princes Risborough

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My dear parishioners

There is no doubt that we are living in testing times. The virus continues to circulate and, in many countries, daily infection rates are reaching record levels. Governments are frantically trying to curb the spread of the Covid 19 by imposing lockdowns again, or 'firebreak lockdowns' or curfews or three tier restrictions as we have here in England. I think it is good to remember in our prayers all those who have died from this virus, those who are suffering from the effects, at home or in hospital and of course all those who have lost their jobs.

Today is the 30th Sunday in ordinary Time and the Gospel comes from Matthew 22: 34-40. Once again, we see that, just like in last Sunday's gospel, the Pharisees are playing games with Jesus and trying to catch him out and to score points. **When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees they got together, and to disconcert them, one of them put a question: 'Master, which is the greatest commandment of the Law?'**

In the Jewish Law there were more than 600 commandments so they wanted to see which he would choose and if they could prove him wrong. Jesus is well aware of their intentions and he answers with complete authority. **'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. The second commandment resembles it. You must love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments hang the whole law and the Prophets also.'** Jesus is saying that the greatest commandment is love. Loving God and loving our neighbour are inseparable. We cannot love God and then refuse to love our neighbour.

And Jesus is inviting us to love according to the measure of his own love. He lived out the law of love. He never allowed the laws of religion to overtake the need for love. He always put his Father first and would spend long hours alone with God in prayer. It was from those special moments that he received the guidance, wisdom and strength that he needed to fulfil his mission. And we know from the gospels that he had so many beautiful encounters with those who needed his healing, his forgiveness, his mercy, his acceptance. We know that his love changed people's lives.

He loved even to giving his life for us. This message of Jesus covers all our relationships. We are invited to love as Jesus did. To love God with our whole being. To put him first in our lives. To reach out to everyone we meet, to offer them compassion, kindness, gentleness, to do whatever we can to help them. And to do all that with love. For as St Paul says in 1 Cor 13:1, if I don't have love I am 'only a resounding gong or a clanging symbol'. What an awful noise that would make. As we know it is not easy to live like Jesus. We fail many times. Let us ask for the grace to put on his heart and mind – to become more and more like him so as to make our world a better place.

I would just like to pick out one small phrase in this gospel that I feel is often forgotten. Love your neighbour **as yourself**. How difficult it can be to love ourselves. Sometimes we can be our own very harsh critics. Sometimes we forget to be kind and merciful to ourselves. We can't forgive ourselves for past mistakes. We do not value ourselves enough. We criticise ourselves and judge ourselves very harshly. We need to remember that nothing we can do that can make God love us more. He loves us exactly as we are. He created us in love. He values us, so why should we not value ourselves.

Let us also ask the grace to see ourselves and love ourselves as God does. There are beautiful words in the book of the Prophet Jeremiah 31:3. God speaks and says: **I have loved you with an everlasting love**. Sometimes it can be helpful to say these words over and over again. God says to me 'I have loved you with an everlasting love.'

For me this is a beautiful gospel with such a powerful and hopeful message -love. I am great believer in 'One Day, One step at a time'. What does loving God mean today & How can I put that into practise? What does loving others mean today & How can I put that into practise? What does loving myself mean today & How can I put that into practise?

I want to end this reflection with two lines from the Responsorial Psalm (psalm 17) from this Sunday's liturgy. Words that can give us courage and comfort when we feel afraid, upset, discouraged. Words to remind us that God will never let us down.

My God is the rock where I take refuge;

My shield, my mighty help, my fortress.

Stay safe this week. May God bless you all

Fr Lijo

Second Collection: This weekend our second collection is for World Mission Sunday. Please put your donation into the baskets at the back of the church. Missio is such a wonderful charity, very close to the heart of our Holy Father Pope Francis, as it is his very own special charity. Missio supports missionaries who work alongside communities that are poor or in need.

November Prayer Lists for the Faithful Departed: During the month of November we remember our departed family and friends. In the past years in St Teresa's parishioners have written the names of their loved ones on November prayer lists which have remained close to the altar for the whole month. Unfortunately due to the Covid 19 pandemic we will not be able to leave the lists out for people to sign. This year I invite you to bring your own list in an envelope and leave it in the basket which will be at the back of the church or drop it through the presbytery letterbox. Or alternatively, since some of you are still shielding and unable to come to church physically, you can email me the names to presbytery@st-teresas.org.uk. We will make sure to print them off and add to the basket that will be placed on the altar and your loved ones will be remembered during mass- the public masses and also when I celebrate mass privately.

November 2nd - Feast of All Souls: The special mass for All Souls Day is at 10.00am on Monday 2nd November. If you wish to attend please book your place. Booking details are given at the end of this newsletter.

Tuesday 3rd November: Mass for all those who have died during the year. This lovely mass will be offered for all those who have died during the past year. Unfortunately due to the Covid 19 situation numbers must be restricted and so attendance is by invitation only.

Retrouvaille: You Can Help Your Marriage - Do you feel alone? Are you frustrated or angry at each other? Do you argue or have you just stopped talking to each other? Does talking about it only make it worse?

Retrouvaille (pronounced retro-vi with a long i) helps couples through difficult times in their marriages. There is no group therapy or group work. This programme has helped 10s of 1000s of couples experiencing difficulties in their marriage. For confidential information about Retrouvaille', or to register for the next programme, a Virtual weekend commencing on 12th - 15th Nov 2020 Call or text 0788 7296983 or 0797 3380443. Email retrouvailleukinfo@gmail.com or visit www.retrouvaille.org.uk.

Would you like to join a Zoom group discussing the Diocese's Webinars on the Post-Lockdown Church? On 5th August Pope Francis called on the Church to reflect on our current situation. In response, the diocesan Pastoral Ministry Office is hosting a series of online webinars on Monday evenings through the autumn. They began on 21st September with Bishop David reflecting on the last six months, and posing some key questions as we go forward. Other topics will include reaching out to the needy, building community, prayer and spirituality, and catechesis. The webinars are free to attend, but you will need to register to receive the web link. To register and see previous videos in the series, go to <http://formationpathways.co.uk/exploring-the-post-lockdown-church-webinar-series/>. **To join the parish Zoom discussion group which will last for 1 hour every Wednesday at 7.30pm**, email Deacon Seán at: duffyseanm@hotmail.co.uk

Princes Risborough Food Cupboard – Week of 19 October 2020: 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 vegetables, Packets of dried pasta, Tins of fruit, Tins of rice pudding, Tins or cartons of custard, Long-life dairy milk (UHT), Long life non-dairy milk, Packets of cereal, Packets of tea (preferably 80 bags), Packets of biscuits, Used carrier bags (we recycle them)

Things we have plenty of, so don't need any more at the moment: Tins of potatoes, Tins of mushy and marrowfat peas, Fruit juices

Saunderton Lodge is desperately short of microwaves. If anybody is updating their current microwave and the old one is in good order they would love to have it.

Christmas Cards: In past years we have sold lovely Christmas cards from Aid to the Church in Need and Traidcraft in the Narthex after mass. Unfortunately, this year we are unable to do this. This is because we must follow the very strict guidelines from the government in order to keep everyone safe. We must do everything we can to prevent the spread of the virus. It is possible to order the cards directly from Aid to the Church in Need and Traidcraft.

MASS Bookings for Wednesday 28th October to All Souls (2nd November)

Please: Wear masks – **Do not** come if you have symptoms or are self-isolating.

When Booking - We Need: **Name(s);** whether household or bubble;

Number of Seats; **which Mass;** and: *****N.B.** - ***phone number*****..

Please keep to this timetable – ***Note special arrangements for ALL SOULS***

For Mass at 10am on Wednesday 28th October:

Booking: **opens** 9am Saturday 24th October

: **closes** 9am Tuesday 27th October

Confirmation: on Tuesday 27th October by 6pm

Email: stteresa.WEDNESDAY.masses@gmail.com

Text: 07761 301435 (or answerphone)

Masses: 6.30pm Saturday 31st Oct or 8am/10am Sun 1st Nov (All Saints):

Booking: **opens** 9am Monday 26th October

: **closes** 6pm Thursday 29th October

Confirmation: on Friday 30th October by 6pm

Email: stteresa.WEEKEND.masses@gmail.com

Text: 07761 301374 (or answerphone)

For Mass at 10am on Monday 2nd November (All Souls)

Booking: **opens** 9am Friday 30th October

: **closes** 12 noon Sunday 1st November

Confirmation: on Sunday 1st November by 6pm

Please use the WEEKEND email or phone/text number

Please book for this Mass SEPARATELY from any other booking.