



# ST TERESA'S

## Newsletter

14th February 2021

My dear friends

Our Gospel for this week is the story of the healing of the leper (Mark 1: 40-45). I think the compassion of Jesus shines through this story.

In the time of Jesus leprosy was used to describe any kind of repulsive skin disease.

Lepers were completely isolated from their families and from the community.

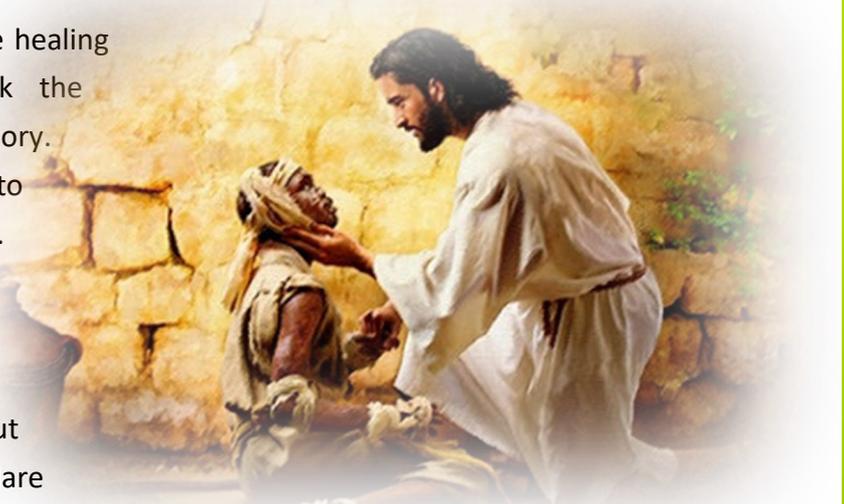
They had to live apart – if they came near the village or town they had to shout out 'unclean, unclean'. Nobody would ever dare

touch a leper. First of all, they would be afraid of catching the disease themselves and secondly, they would also have been rendered unclean. Touching the leper would have made Jesus unclean in people's eyes. So, this story shows us the depths of his compassion- there are no lengths he will not go to help this man. Compassion means 'to suffer-with-another'. Jesus suffers with all of us. He knows our hurts and our pains. May this Gospel encourage all of us to cry out to him, as the leper does, 'If you want to, you can heal me.'

It is hard to believe that Lent begins this week- on 17<sup>th</sup> February- with Ash Wednesday. I was wondering what meaning Lent might have for us as we live through these testing times. Even though there is much to rejoice about given the success of the vaccination programme, there is still so much worry and anxiety about the new strains and whether the vaccines will be effective. When will this third lockdown end? And we cannot forget all those who have been affected by this virus and all those who mourn the loss of loved ones.

So, what meaning might Ash Wednesday and the six weeks of Lent have for us? The ashes that we will receive on Ash Wednesday remind us of our origin. We are dust and we shall return to dust. Once again Pope Francis expresses it beautifully well, '*We are weak, frail and mortal. Centuries and millennia pass, and we come and go; before the immensity of galaxies and space, we are nothing. We are dust in the universe.*' But before we get too depressed with this thought he goes on to say: '*Yet we are dust loved by God. It pleased the Lord to gather that dust in his hands and to breathe into it the breath of life (cf. Gen 2:7).*'

I find that expression so beautiful- dust loved by God. It means we are precious in his sight; we are immensely loved by God, dust wanted by God. This is a wonderful way to begin Lent- to know that we are loved and wanted by God. I think that can make us feel so safe and so secure. – we have nothing to be afraid of. Pope Francis calls each one of us '*God's hope, his treasure and his glory.*' And he encourages us: '*we were born to be loved; we were born to be children of God.*'



I love to think of Lent as a time of grace- a time to let God gaze on us with his love. Once we know we are loved, everything is possible. The ashes remind us also that everything we own, possess, all our successes will ultimately become useless, for we can take nothing with us when we die. It is a sobering thought, but what will endure is love- the love we have for God, our families, our friends, our church, our neighbourhood, our world- that will endure and as Pope Francis tells us *'is our passport to heaven.'*

Often during Lent, we give up something- sweets, chocolate, biscuits, cigarettes- but perhaps during this time of grace we can start to think about how we can be more loving. Towards ourselves, our families, our friends, our church, our world. It is for each one of us to take stock of where we are. But always with the thought in the back of our minds 'I am dust loved by God. I am God's hope, his treasure and his glory'. Once we have opened our hearts to God's love, we can change our lives. Sometimes it is hard to open our hearts to receive God's love, for whatever reason. We cannot do it by ourselves and we need healing. 'Only Jesus, who knows and loves our heart, can heal it. Lent is also a time of healing.' So much to rejoice over!



This year, in the light of the ongoing COVID 19 pandemic, the Vatican has recommended a different method for distributing ashes to ensure the safety of everyone. So, we will not follow the usual tradition. Instead, the ashes will be sprinkled over the head of each person. I just want to encourage you to repeat the words of Pope Francis in your heart as the ashes are sprinkled on your forehead. 'I am dust loved by God. I am God's hope, his treasure and his glory.'

I really pray that for each one of us Lent will be a truly graced time. I pray that we will receive the healing that we need and come to understand just how much we are loved by God. It is this grace which will give us the freedom and the courage to change and to become more open and more loving towards others. And then the world will change! May God bless you all!

Fr Lijo

## Weekly Notices

### Self-isolating!

On Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> February I was called to the hospice to administer the Sacrament of the Sick to one of the patients. On Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> February, the hospice notified me that the patient had tested positive for Covid 19 and told me I would have to self-isolate for 10 days. When I went on the Wednesday, they did not know the patient had the virus otherwise they would not have asked me to go.

Unfortunately, this means that there will be no public mass here until Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> February. (My 10 days of isolation finish on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> February). I am really feeling fine and I had my vaccination on 29<sup>th</sup> January, but even so I must follow the regulations very strictly and self-isolate until Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> February. I will of course continue to say my private mass and prayers, but in the presbytery. Please be sure that I will be remembering you all very specially during these difficult and troubled times.

I am very grateful to Deacon Sean for accepting to lead a service on Ash Wednesday which will consist of the Liturgy of the Word & Communion and the Distribution of Ashes.

**Just to repeat again.**

Celebrations of the Word & Communion and Distribution of Ashes led by Deacon Sean on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> February.

No Mass on the weekend of 13/14<sup>th</sup> February.

No Mass on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> February.

**The next public mass is on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> February.**

Please stay safe and keep well. Looking forward to seeing you on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> February.

**Ash Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> February:** As I mentioned in my reflection, we will be following the recommendation of the Vatican for the distribution of ashes in order to ensure the safety of everyone during this pandemic. The Ashes will be blessed after the Gospel and the short homily. After the prayer of blessing, Deacon Sean will say to everyone in the church, ***'Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.'***

He will then sprinkle his own head with ash. He will then sanitize his hands, put on his visor and plastic gloves. He will come to each person in the church and sprinkle ashes on their head without saying anything. The service will then continue with the Liturgy of Holy Communion.

I know it will look a bit different this year but it will still be very meaningful and prayerful and a lovely way to begin Lent. However, if you are unable to come to this service or prefer to stay at home please remember that you can still pray this beautiful ceremony in your heart. Cardinal Vincent Nichols beautifully says, "Receiving ashes is an outward sign of an inner step, a movement of the heart towards our beloved Lord. This year I invite you to concentrate much more on this inner, spiritual movement than on its outward manifestation in the imposition of ashes." And let us all remember the words of Pope Francis, 'I am dust loved by God. I am God's hope, his treasure and his glory.'

**Stations of the Cross:** During Lent we will pray the Stations of the Cross every Wednesday after the morning mass. Once again, we will have to change our method of doing this in order to keep everyone as safe as possible. All of us will remain in our seats and the reader will read the prayers and reflections from the lectern. We are able to turn to face each Station but we must all remain in our place. We will also have a shortened version of the Stations of the Cross. Nevertheless, I know it will still be very meaningful and prayerful.

**Lenten Resources:** Some of you may find the resources from the Pastoral Ministry Office of the Diocese helpful as you begin your Lenten journey. If you click on the link you should be able to find information for different ideas such as an online prayer course, Daily Scripture snippets, a Jesuit daily retreat, joining a reflection group and many more resources. I do encourage you to take a look. I am certain you will find something that appeals to you. <https://pastoralministryoffice.org/home-copy/growing-in-faith/parish-resources/lent-resources/>

**Climbing the Holy Mountain of Easter:** Would you like an opportunity to share and reflect on the Sunday readings during Lent as a way of preparing to celebrate Holy Week and the Easter Triduum more meaningfully? We will be meeting via Zoom starting this Ash Wednesday 17 February, and continuing Wednesday 24 February, and 3, 10, 17, 24 and 31 March. If you are interested in joining the group, please email Liz Clark on [liz.clark4@btopenworld.com](mailto:liz.clark4@btopenworld.com)

**St. Teresa's Parish Christmas Challenge 2020:** The challenge is now over and despite the restrictions of lockdown, a remarkable total of £585 was raised, to be divided equally between Cafod and our parish. A big thank you to everyone involved, either in accepting a challenge or by supporting someone else in their endeavours.

**On behalf of Missio,** Angela Bailey would like to thank all the Red Missio box holders who kindly delivered the contents of their boxes to her. The total collected was £710.23 which was fantastic considering less use of cash during the pandemic. For those who sent money directly to Missio, the total Parish contribution will be announced in the Spring.

**Coffee and Company:** If you would like an opportunity to chat with other parishioners just follow the link below at 10.30am on Tuesday February 16th. Join Zoom Meeting.

Meeting ID: 726 5220 8453                      Passcode: Vt0jgu

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/72652208453?pwd=bElOQmZrcU5xcEN1UmNpdGVnSIFadz09>

**Would you like to learn more about your faith?** Consider joining online to follow the **Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies** or **Diocesan Certificate in Religious Studies**. Both courses offer the same eight modules in Scripture and Catholic Theology with the CCRS leading to a nationally recognised qualification. Those who follow the CCRS/DCRS say they gain a great deal from the course, deepening their knowledge and understanding of their faith. To find out more about the course, contact Steve O'Brien. Email [obrien@nores.org.uk](mailto:obrien@nores.org.uk) or for an application form contact Ann Collon. Email: [admin@nores.org.uk](mailto:admin@nores.org.uk) or visit our website [www.nores.org.uk/AdultEducationCCRS](http://www.nores.org.uk/AdultEducationCCRS)

**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 spaghetti hoops, Tins of sweetcorn, Tins of other vegetables, Tins of soup, Tins of meat, Meat pies (tins), Tins of fruit, Tins of rice pudding, Tins or cartons of custard, Long-life dairy milk (UHT), Jars or packets of coffee, Jars of jam, Packets of biscuits, Fruit squash, Dog food, Cat food, Shower gel, Toothpaste, Washing up liquid

The Presbytery: New Road, Princes Risborough, HP27 0JN. Tel: 01844 345578  
E-mail: [presbytery@st-teresas.org.uk](mailto:presbytery@st-teresas.org.uk)                      Website: [www.st-teresas.org.uk](http://www.st-teresas.org.uk)  
Parish Priest: Fr. Lijo Jose MSFS                      Deacon: Sean Duffy (343705)  
Safeguarding Representative - Phil Hughes (345006)

## S I X T H S U N D A Y O F T H E Y E A R

Saturday 13th February	<b>Private Mass</b>	Teresa & Derek Whittle, Int.	Weekday of Ordinary Time
Sunday 14th February	<b>Private Mass</b>	Stan Elcock, RIP.	
Monday 15th February	1: 00 pm	Funeral Service- Evelyn Scott-Jackson	
	<b>Private Mass</b>	Evelyn Scott-Jackson, RIP.	Weekday of Ordinary Time
Tuesday 16th February	<b>Private Mass</b>	Nancy Bennis, RIP.	Weekday of Ordinary Time
Wednesday 17th February	10: 00 am	Ash Wednesday Service	
	<b>Private Mass</b>	Stan Elcock, RIP.	Ash Wednesday
Thursday 18th February	<b>Private Mass</b>	Karen Woycik, RIP.	Weekday of Lent
Friday 19th February	<b>Private Mass</b>	Jean O'Brien, Int.	Weekday of Lent
Saturday 20th February	<b>Private Mass</b>	Mary Moore, Int.	Weekday of Lent

### **BOOKINGS for Ash Wednesday Service (17<sup>th</sup> February)** **and Mass at 9.30am on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2021**

**Please: Do wear Masks – Do not come if shielding, symptomatic or self-isolating.**

**Please think carefully –**

about your own vulnerability – and that of others around you –  
before deciding whether to come. At this time, there is no obligation to attend.

**For each booking**, we need: **Names**, which **Mass**, number of **Seats** and **PHONE** number

#### **ASH WEDNESDAY 17<sup>th</sup> February**

**There will be no Mass on this day – it will be a Service for Ash Wednesday**

**Booking: opens:** 9am on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> February

: **closes:** 9am on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> February

**Confirmation:** by 6pm on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> February

**Email:** [stteresa.WEDNESDAY.masses@gmail.com](mailto:stteresa.WEDNESDAY.masses@gmail.com)

**Text:** 07761 301435 (or answerphone)

#### **Mass at 9.30am, Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> February**

**\*\*N.B. Only one Mass this weekend\*\***

**Booking: opens** 9am Monday 15<sup>th</sup> February

: **closes** 9am Friday 19<sup>th</sup> February

**Confirmation:** by 6pm on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> February

**Email:** [stteresa.WEEKEND.masses@gmail.com](mailto:stteresa.WEEKEND.masses@gmail.com)

**Text:** 07761 301374 (or answerphone)