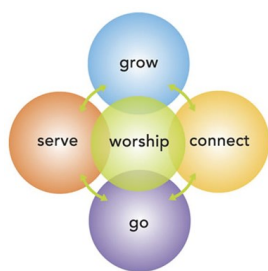


The Parish of STONY STRATFORD with CALVERTON



THE PARISH NEWSLETTER THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD SUNDAY 10th January AD 2016



Welcome to the Parish Church where, after the example of the early church, we celebrate the Eucharist: the "apostles teaching and fellowship, the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Acts 2:42)

Today the Church celebrates the Solemnity of the Baptism of Our Lord. In the modern calendar this concludes the holy season of Christmas. The Church recalls Our Lord's second manifestation or epiphany which occurred on the occasion of His baptism in the Jordan. Jesus descended into the River to sanctify its waters and to give them the power to beget sons of God. The event takes on the importance of a second creation in which the entire Trinity intervenes.

In the Eastern Church this feast is called Theophany because at the baptism of Christ in the River Jordan God appeared in three persons. The baptism of John was a sort of sacramental preparatory for the Baptism of Christ. It moved men to sentiments of repentance and induced them to confess their sins. Christ did not need the baptism of John. Although He appeared in the "substance of our flesh" and was recognized "outwardly like unto ourselves," He was absolutely sinless and impeccable. He conferred upon the water the power of the true Baptism which would remove all the sins of the world: "Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him Who takes away the sin of the world."



Many of the incidents which accompanied Christ's baptism are symbolical of what happened at our Baptism. At Christ's baptism the Holy Spirit descended upon Him; at our Baptism the Trinity took its abode in our soul. At His baptism Christ was proclaimed the "Beloved Son" of the Father; at our Baptism we become the adopted sons of God. At Christ's baptism the heavens were opened; at our Baptism heaven was opened to us. At His baptism Jesus prayed; after our Baptism we must pray to avoid the occasions of sin.

THIS WEEK IN OUR PARISH

TODAY:

9:30am

11:00am.

Pray for:

Monday:

9:30am

8:00pm

Pray for:

Tuesday:

10:30am

2:00pm

7:30pm

Pray for:

Wednesday: St Hilary, Bishop & Doctor

6:00pm

6:15pm

7:30pm

7:30pm

Pray for:

Thursday:

10:30am

Pray for:

Friday:

8:00am

7:30pm

Pray for:

Saturday:

10:00am

4:00pm

4:30pm

Pray for:

Next Sunday: 2nd SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

9:30am

11:00am.

Pray for:

READINGS NEXT SUNDAY

2nd Sunday in Ordinary time

1st Reading: Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7

Psalm: 29 (part)

2nd Reading: Acts of the Apostles 10:34-38

Gospel: Luke 3: 15-16, 21-22

Sidesmen Team 2

Altar Servers Team 1

Offertory Ladies Group

Cleaning Team 2

Gardening Team 2

Worshipping Numbers last Sunday: 151

THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

PARISH MASS at St Mary & St Giles

Family Mass at All Saints

Our Parish

Feria (Ordinary Time Begins)

'Squeals on Wheels' in Parish Hall

Bell Ringing Practice

The Sick, Housebound & Handicapped

St Aelred of Rievaulx, Abbott

Mass at All Saints + 'Elevenes'.

Funeral of a Child at SMSG

'Parish Diary Planning Meeting

at the Rectory

For the souls of all children who have died, in particular for Jack Smith R.I.P.

Parish Office Open to arrange:

Banns, Marriages & Baptisms

Handbell Ringing Practice at SMSG School

The Band - Practice at SMSG School

Mass for Healing

at St Mary & St Giles

For the Sick

Feria

Mass at St Mary & St Giles

For Vocations to the Sacred Ministry

Feria

Mass at St Mary & St Giles School

Parish Singers Rehearsal

All Parents

Feria

'Musical Bite' Coffee Morning - SMSG

Confessions in St Mary & St Giles

Evening Prayer in St Mary & St Giles

All Visitors to our Parish Churches

INFORMATION



The Order of Mass is on the laminated card. The references to the Scripture Readings, which may be either listened to or followed in the Bibles provided, along with the Psalm and the Prayer of the Faithful are also included in this Sheet. Hymns are unannounced but are indicated on the boards towards the front of the Nave.

AA Large Print Orders of Service are available at St Mary & St Giles. Please ask a Sidesman or Sideswoman for a copy.



A Loop System is in operation at St Mary & St Giles - please set hearing aids to the "T" position.



Access for the Disabled at St Mary & St Giles is via the path on the north side of the church. **At All Saints** it is via the South Porch.



Gluten-Free Hosts: if you are on a Gluten-Free diet and would like a Gluten-Free Host when you receive Holy Communion please mention this before Mass to one of the Sidesmen or women who will arrange this for you. Please make yourself known to the Parish Priest so that he is aware of your need.



Collections: for the continuing mission of Christ are taken while the altar and gifts of bread and wine are being prepared. If you are a visitor and a taxpayer and would like to make a donation please use the Gift Aid envelopes provided at the end of each row - please fill in your details. This enables us to reclaim, from the Inland Revenue, 25p for each £1 donated.



We observe a period of quiet prayer and reflection before the celebration of Mass, between the end of the Organ Voluntary and the Sacristy Bell being rung, in order that we may be better prepared to worship almighty God.



Please join us at the back of church for tea or coffee after Mass. A priest will be near the main door shortly after the end of Mass should you need to talk with one.

Please take this Service Sheet home with you and use as part of your devotions during the week.

FUTURE DIARY DATES

Saturday 16th January

10:00am 'Musical Bite'
Coffee Morning at SMSG

Thursday 21st January

4:00pm Governor Training
at SMSG School
7:30pm Parochial Church
Council in Parish Hall

Wednesday 27th January
Almshouses Charity Meeting

Monday 1st February
Rector at 'Shared Conversations'

Tuesday 2nd February
CANDLEMASS
10:30am Mass & 'Eleveneses'
at All Saints
7:30pm Parish Mass at SMSG

Tuesday 9th February
Shrove Tuesday
5:30pm Confessions

Wednesday 10th February
ASH WEDNESDAY
7:30pm Parish Mass
with Imposition of Ashes

Saturday 13th February
10:00am 'Musical Bite' Coffee
Morning at SMSG

Wednesday 17th February

7:00pm the 1st of this Lent's
weekly celebrations of the
Stations of the Cross at SMSG
7:30pm Mass at SMSG
8:00pm the start of the Course
'A Faith for Skeptics'
in the Parish Hall

Sunday 5th March

The Rector, at the Invitation of
the Bishop of Dorchester, will
be participating in the Diocesan
'Shared Conversations' on
Human Sexuality
Fr Joseph will celebrate both
Masses today.

Saturday 12th March
10:00am 'Musical Bite' Coffee
Morning at SMSG

Tuesday 15th March
7:30pm Parochial Church
Council in Parish Hall

Thursday 17th March
Diocesan 'Shared Conversations'
on Human Sexuality

Sunday 20th March
Passion (Palm) Sunday
9:30am Joint Parish Mass
6:00pm Evensong

VERY IMPORTANT - Sound System: It is really important that the sound system at St Mary & St Giles is operated each week, but for this to happen we need volunteers to be trained in its use. Please have a word with the Rector or Churchwardens if you would be willing to be part of a rota of volunteers who manage this during the Parish Mass on Sundays and Feast Days. Thank you.

Scripture Readers at Mass and the Offertory bearers: as a parish family we are hugely grateful to all those who take part each week in various ways in the Liturgy. With the need for the Rector to spend some time at the back of church after Mass before needing to leave for the 11:00am Mass at All Saints it would be really helpful if we could ensure that the Mass runs more to time. If Scripture readers could be at the Lectern at the start of the preceding item of the reading they have been asked to read that would be really helpful - so the First Reader should be at the Lectern as the Collect commences and the Second Reader should be at the Lectern as the Psalm commences

In order that the altar can be prepared at the Offertory without undue delay could those responsible for bringing up the Gifts of Bread and Wine each week please ensure that this is done during the first verse of the Offertory hymn. The alms may be brought up towards the end of the hymn as they take time to collect. Thank you.

Tuesday 12th January - Parish Diary Planning Meeting:

Would all those who need to book dates in the Parish Diary for the remainder of the year (and make advance bookings for 2017), please come to the Rectory this Tuesday (12th) at 7:30pm in order that we can ensure that everything is planned as much as possible. Thank you.

Saturday, 16th January 10am - 12 noon Musical Bite

Coffee Morning in the Parish Hall: Enjoy tea, coffee and cakes in the cosy Parish Hall and have the added pleasure of hearing the piano, played by Dave King.

Thursday, 21st January TT@TT: SMSG Band will be giving a lunchtime Concert at 12.30pm. 45 minutes of fun music, with hot drinks on tap - you bring you sandwiches - we provide the rest! A warm welcome awaits to this free concert. Why not bring a friend or work colleague along?

Urgent Request: Do you know of any organists or pianists who would be willing to play at the 11:00am Family Mass at All Saints to cover two Sunday's per month. Please let Fr Ross know if you do, or indeed if you are hiding your light under a bushel and might be willing to have a go.

Readers at All Saints: If any one would like to be added to the list of Scripture readers at the Family Mass would they please have a word with Jane Hardy. Thank you.

Seating at St Mary & St Giles: the overwhelming choice over whether to have a cushioned seat pad or a sea-grass seat, following the great 'Sit down and Try Out' is that we should have them with cushioned seat pads.

As previously reported the PCC is committed to seeing the disabled access project completed first. One or two people have asked whether we could decorate the church before doing anything else. While that is understandable, it should be borne in mind that it makes sense to do all the structural work first, otherwise it means decorating twice (and the cost of decorating the church is very, very expensive).

Similarly, there are two very good reasons for replacing

PARISH NEWS AND NOTICES



the seating before decorating and they are: a) because it is important that you are able to sit in comfort; and more importantly b) because all the present seating is infected with woodworm and we need to replace it as soon as is possible otherwise we run the risk of woodworm infecting the structural woodwork in the building. The cost of such an infestation would be ruinous.

Once the faculty is granted for the current works, we shall be launching a grant seeking and fundraising effort. A number of people have asked if they can donate chairs in memory of loved ones to which the answer is, "Yes, and that is very generous of you."

The Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches has visited St Mary & St Giles and considered our proposals. At its subsequent meeting it recommended approval. We now await the receipt of the faculty, although there will be a slight delay due to the disabled access part of the proposals requiring a modest repositioning of two ledgers in the floor of the tower area. The Chancellor has asked for a little more information, but as these are not being removed, but kept adjacent to their present position, this is a minor part of the faculty application. By repositioning them they will still be visible rather than the new interior doors obscuring part of them.

A Personal Message: Dear All, Many thanks for your thoughts and prayers – they are much appreciated. Because of my Multiple Sclerosis I have had to give up driving so now attend a church local to where I live in Brackley. Since I started working in Stony in 1998 SMSG has had a special place in my affections and continues to do so. I hope to visit SMSG on occasions when I can get a lift. With best wishes – Michael Doolan.

N.B. from the Rector: Michael has asked that his name be removed from our prayer list, but I am sure that we would all want to keep him in our own private intentions and prayers especially when we are at the altar.

Lent, Holy Week & Easter 2016

"What already?"

Yes. Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on 8th February and Easter is very early this year on March 27th.

In the light of this Fr Ross would appreciate it if Parish Groups and all those wishing to organise events for the next three months would liaise with him over the course of the next two weeks in order that he has everything in the Parish Diary. Once that exercise is complete he will finalise the Lent, Holy Week and Easter Programme of worship and events.

What can I do?

Begin to prepare to keep a good and Holy Lent. Think about what spiritual discipline you are going to take on rather than simply giving up vegemite (in reality that is what much Milk Chocolate is as the cocoa solids are so often substituted with vegetable fats).

There is nothing wrong with making sacrifices....indeed it is commendableproviding one doesn't binge once Easter Day arrives!

However, the taking up either the:

Corporal Works of Mercy

- To feed the hungry;
- To give drink to the thirsty;
- To clothe the naked;
- To harbour the harbourless;
- To visit the sick;
- To ransom the captive;

- To bury the dead.

or, the Spiritual Works of Mercy:

- To instruct the ignorant;
- To counsel the doubtful;
- To admonish sinners;
- To bear wrongs patiently;
- To forgive offences willingly;
- To comfort the afflicted;
- To pray for the living and the dead.

are an ancient and proven Lenten discipline to aid progress in the spiritual life and draw us closer to Christ.

In the meantime, there are just over four weeks left to return your Palm Crosses from last Palm Sunday in order that they can be burnt to make ashes for use on Ash Wednesday.

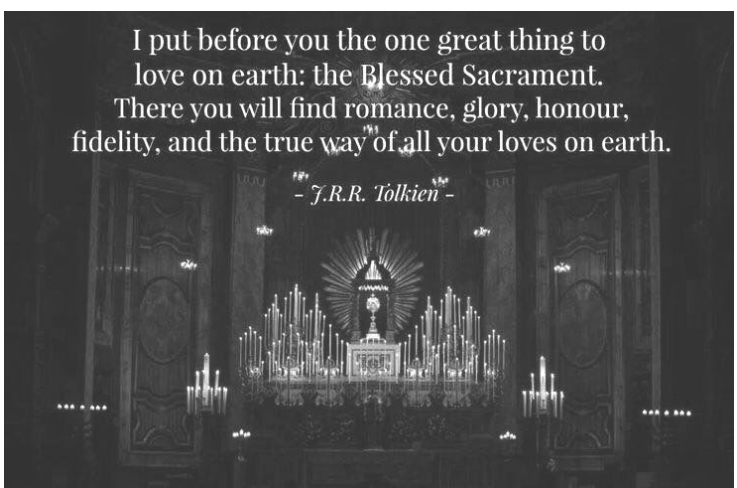
If you wish some guidance in preparing for Lent, please ask Fr Ross to arrange to see you.

From one of Father Stanton's Last Sermons in S. Alban's, Holborn

"Never you be ashamed of the Blood of Christ. I know it is not the popular religion of the day. They will call out 'mediævalism', but you know as well as possible that the whole Bible from cover to cover is incriminated, reddened with the Blood of Christ.

Never you be ashamed of the Blood of Christ. You are Blood-bought Christians. It is the song of the redeemed, of the saints, and of all Christians on earth—redeemed by His Blood. You never be ashamed of it. The uniform we Christians wear is scarlet. If you are ashamed of the uniform, for goodness' sake, man, leave the service. Oh! never be ashamed of Christ! That is the song of the redeemed: 'To Him be glory and praise for ever, Amen.'

And the second thing is this: Let us all remember that our religion is the religion of a personal Saviour. It is not a system of ethics, it is not a scheme of philosophy, it is not a conclusion of science, but it is personal love to a personal living Saviour—that is our religion! Why, when you can hear the voice of Christ off the altar to-day at Mass, 'DO this in memory of Me.' 'You' and 'Me.' He 'Christ'—"me"—memory—"Don't forget Me here at the Altar" our Lord says to you—"I will never forget you—don't you ever forget Me." 'Do this in memory of Me.' It is a personal religion, by which we can say, 'He loved me, and gave Himself for me'—"The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." And then, in all your experiences, however deep they may be, when you enter into the shadow of death, and go through the agony of the dissolution of your body—you can say: 'He loved me, and gave Himself for me.' He loved me and washed me from my sins His Blood, to Him be glory and dominion and praise henceforth for ever, Amen."



I put before you the one great thing to
love on earth: the Blessed Sacrament.
There you will find romance, glory, honour,
fidelity, and the true way of all your loves on earth.

- J.R.R. Tolkien -

MASS TEXTS PROPER TO TODAY'S OBSERVANCE

Reflection before Mass:

Today we celebrate the baptism of Jesus, the Son of Mary and the carpenter from Nazareth, who now begins his public ministry and is revealed as the Son of God.

The Collect

Eternal Father, who at the baptism of Jesus revealed him to be your Son, anointing him with the Holy Spirit: grant to us, who are born again by water and the Spirit, that we may be faithful to our calling as your adopted children; 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. **Amen.**

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD (SIT)

The First Reading

SMSG Reader: Dai Evans

All Saints Reader: Eilish Friedman

Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11

Old Testament Page 609

The Responsorial Psalm

(from Psalm 72)

**R/. Bless the Lord, my soul!
Lord God, how great you are!**

Lord God, how great you are,
clothed in majesty and glory,
wrapped in light as in a robe!
You stretch out the heavens like a tent. ®

Above the rains you build your dwelling.
You make the clouds your chariot,
you walk on the wings of the wind,
you make the winds your messengers
and flashing fire your servants. ®

How many are your works, O Lord!
In wisdom you have made them all.
The earth is full of your riches.
There is the sea, vast and wide,
with its moving swarms past counting,
living things great and small. ®

All of these look to you
to give them their food in due season.
You give it, they gather it up:
you open your hand, they have their fill. ®

You take back your spirit, they die,
returning to the dust from which they came.
You send forth your spirit, they are created;
and you renew the face of the earth. ®

Second Reading

Reader: Rosie Page

Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-7

New Testament Page 181

Gospel Acclamation

(STAND)

Alleluia, alleluia!

The heavens opened and the Father's voice was heard:
"This is my beloved Son, listen to him."

Alleluia!

The Gospel

Luke 3:15-16, 21-22

New Testament Page 51

The Prayer of the Faithful

(Biddings: Fr Joseph)

Priest: My brothers and sisters, on this day, the heavens were opened as the Spirit descended upon Christ at his Baptism. In prayer, let us ask the Father to unseal the fountain of his blessings upon the Church and the world.

Intercessor: For the Church, like her Lord, the Beloved of the Father, that his favour may always rest upon her, and his Spirit overshadow her with truth and power..... Let us pray to the Lord:

V/. Lord, hear us.

R/. Lord, graciously hear us.

For those entrusted with the work of government..... that they may serve the cause of right, and strive to establish true justice on earth, let us pray to the Lord:

For those who have become lukewarm in their faith, that the Spirit given in their baptism will rekindle faith and love in their hearts....., let us pray to the Lord:

For ourselves and our community....., that we may eagerly follow Christ's call at our baptism and establish true justice on earth, let us pray to the Lord:

For those who are sick or bereaved... Wendy, Fiddy Abraham, Anna Archer, Maggie Baker, Mary Barry, Henry Blake, Richard Coley, Gill Edwards, Sue Gower, Russell Herbert, Paul, Margaret Hooton, Rebecca, Magnus John, Isaac Lyon, Sue Maton, Cyril Millward, Capt John Richards CA, Jenny Smallbones, Alma Steinmetz, Fr Edmund, June Wilde, Janis Williams, Jeff Wright, Marian Wright...*for all those in hospital; those awaiting the results of medical tests; the housebound, those convalescent at home or in residential care; and all those in need...*, that the Lord may grant them health and peace through his Spirit, let us pray to the Lord:

For the departed whose memory we recall... Caroline Adebisi, Brian Barnes, Lyn Butterworth, Gloria Dixey, Martha John, Iris McLennan, Gay Millward, Susan de Mont, Joan Orchard, Mick Phillips, Francis Pitfield, Jack Smith... and for those whose anniversaries of death occur at this time...**10th** William Stockings, Dora Stockings; **11th** Jonathan Shirley, Anne Parsons, Alan Britton; **12th** Eileen Coats, Martin Gunstone; **13th** Winifred Colegate, George Bailey, Mary Webb; **14th** John Marsh; **16th** Doris Redgrave, Elizabeth Richards..., that the power of God's grace may bring them to the fullness of glory, let us pray to the Lord:

✠ Rest eternal grant to them, O Lord.

And let light perpetual shine upon them.

Priest: Almighty Father, by our baptism you adopted us as your sons and daughters. Hear our prayers through that favour which rests on your beloved Son, who is Lord for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Communion Reflection: *I who am Divine am truly in you. I can never be sundered from you. However far be parted never can be separated. I am in you and you are in me. We could not be any closer. We two are fused in one, poured into a single mould. Thus, unwearied, we shall remain forever.*

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