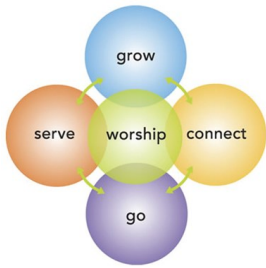


The Parish of
STONY STRATFORD
 with
CALVERTON



THE PARISH NEWSLETTER
THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD
SUNDAY 31st 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's first reading gives us an important insight to understand profoundly the mystery of the Lord's Presentation in the Temple by Mary and Joseph, in accordance with the canons of Mosaic Law. The text, taken from the Prophet Malachi says, 'I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me; and suddenly there will come to the temple the Lord who you seek' (Mal 3:1). From all the Gospels, we know that it is the Precursor, St John the Baptist who was born 6 months before Jesus, that God sent to prepare His way. Putting these facts together, we can comprehend the words of the Prophet Malachi. The Lord God promised that He would send a Precursor to prepare His way. Since there is only 6 months between the birth of St John the Baptist and Jesus it is clear that the prophecy meant that suddenly after the Precursor, the Lord Himself will come. So, soon after the Baptist's birth, God entered His temple. Jesus' presentation signifies God's entrance to His temple. God made man entered His temple, presenting Himself to those who were really searching for Him.

Today's Gospel introduces us to different people and events that in themselves provide numerous lessons and themes for further reflection. First of all, Mary and Joseph respect the Mosaic Law by offering the sacrifice prescribed for the poor: a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.

Simeon and Anna were two venerable elderly people dedicated to prayer and fasting and so their strong religious spirit rendered them able to recognize the Messiah. Jesus' presentation in the temple, reminds us that prayer and contemplation are not just a waste of time or an obstacle to charity. On the contrary, time could not be better spent than in prayer as true Christian charity is a consequence of a solid interior life. Only those who pray and offer penance, like Simeon and Anna, are open to the breath of the Spirit. They know how to recognize the Lord in the circumstances in which He manifests Himself because they possess an ample interior vision, and they have learned how to love with the heart of the One whose very name is Charity.



THIS WEEK IN OUR PARISH

TODAY: THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD (CANDLEMASS)

9:30am PARISH MASS at St Mary & St Giles
11:00am. Family Mass at All Saints
 Pray for: Our Parish

Monday: Feria
 9:30am 'Squeals on Wheels' in Parish Hall
 8:00pm Bell Ringing Practice
 Pray for: The Sick, Housebound & Handicapped

Tuesday: Feria
10:30am Mass at All Saints + 'Elevenes'
 Pray for: For Peace & Charity

Wednesday: St Blaise, Bishop & Martyr
12:00noon Society of the Holy Cross Chapter Meets at SMSG starting with Mass to which all are welcome

6:00pm Parish Office Open to arrange: Banns, Marriages & Baptisms
 6:15pm Handbell Ringing Practice at SMSG School
 7:30pm The Band - Practice at SMSG School
7:30pm Mass for Healing at St Mary & St Giles
 Pray for: For Sufferers of Respiratory Diseases

Thursday: Feria
10:30am Mass at St Mary & St Giles
 7:00pm Flower Arrangers meet with Rector
 Pray for: For all Parish Priests

Friday: St Agatha, Virgin & Martyr
8:00am Mass at St Mary & St Giles School
 7:30pm Parish Singers Rehearsal
 Pray for: For the lay apostolate of women

Saturday: St Paul Miki & Companions, Martyrs
 4:00pm Confessions in St Mary & St Giles
 4:30pm Evening Prayer in St Mary & St Giles
 Pray for: For the Church in Japan

Next Sunday: 5th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
9:30am PARISH MASS at St Mary & St Giles
6:00pm EVENSONG at All Saints
 with the choir 'Quorum'
 Pray for: Our Parish

READINGS NEXT SUNDAY
5th Sunday in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Malachi 3:1-4
 Psalm: 24 (part)
 2nd Reading: Hebrews 2:14-18
 Gospel: Luke 2:22-40

Sidesmen Team 5
 Altar Servers Team 4
 Offertory Bellringers
 Cleaning Team 1
 Gardening Team 3

Worshipping Numbers last Sunday: 141

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

Monday 1st February

Greenleys First School visit St Mary & St Giles Church Pipe Organ Rector at 'Shared Conversations'

Tuesday 2nd February CANDLEMASS

10:30am Mass & 'Elevenses' at All Saints
7:30pm Parish Mass at SMSG

Thursday 4th February

Meeting of Rector & Flower Arrangers regarding Flower Festival for HM The Queen's 90th Birthday

Sunday 7th February

6:00pm Evensong at All saints with 'Quorum'

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 21st February

Masses as usual
4:00pm Lenten Motets & Meditations

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

Advent Boxes: Please note that today is the last day for the return of our Advent Boxes. *Thank you*

Next Sunday: In place of the 11:00am Family Mass the choir 'Quorum' will be leading Evensong in All Saints Church at 6:00pm. With a beautiful setting and some anthems as well as congregational hymns it promises to be a beautiful celebration of this much loved service from the Book of Common Prayer.

Palm Crosses: Please return your Palm Crosses in order that they may be burnt to ashes for Ash Wednesday. *Thank you.*

Farewell Card and Collection: I have purchased a card which may be signed today in St Mary & St Giles and next week in All Saints for Fr Benjamin as he prepares to move to his next Parish. The Churchwardens will be happy to receive donations towards the purchase of book tokens as a leaving gift from the Parish. *Fr Ross*

The Sound System at St Mary & St Giles: for a number of months now we have been appealing for volunteers to operate the sound system and to secure the equipment after Mass. Unfortunately, no one has come forward and on a number of occasions it has been left completely insecure after Mass - sometimes for up to two days. Considering the system cost £25,000 then it is obvious that if we wish to continue having the benefit of the sound system the present situation needs remedying. The task is not onerous or even complicated and full training will be given. Please do have a word with the Rector or the Churchwardens if you can help. Ideally we would like four or five people so as to share the role on a monthly rota. *Thank you.*

SMSG Flower Arrangers Meeting: will take place on Thursday 4th February at 12 Market Square. At this meeting a proposed Flower Festival to mark HM The Queen's 90th Birthday will be discussed and planned.

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.

Lent, Holy Week & Easter 2016

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday (10th February) and Easter is very early this year on March 27th.

Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving are the traditional methods of participating more fully in the Lenten Spiritual Disciplines.

Prayer: Setting aside time for prayer at least three times a day throughout the year, particularly on rising in the morning and at the going down of the sun, and on retiring for the night is the time honoured tradition of Christians throughout the world. In Lent this pattern of prayer remains, but recourse to prayer at other times of the day during Lent enables us to grow in faith as in praying we are drawn further into our heavenly Father's life and love.

Fasting: Think about what spiritual discipline you are going to take on rather than simply giving up vegetable (in reality that is what much Milk Chocolate is as the cocoa solids are so often substituted with vegetable fats).

PARISH NEWS AND NOTICES



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

To help with this and raise money for our Lent Appeal (see below) Saturday's at 12:00noon sees our customary Lent Lunches in the Church or Parish Hall.

Almsgiving: Each year Christians set aside any money they have saved by fasting and often make additional offerings of alms for those in need. Each year our Parish supports a charity during Lent. This year the PCC, mindful of the suffering of so many Christians throughout the world, particularly in Iraq and Syria, agreed to support the work of the Barnabas Fund. **Lent Boxes are available today** along with Gift Aid envelopes and a Prayer Card. Notices about the work of the Barnabas Fund are on display in each of our Parish Churches. In order that we may learn more about the work of the Barnabas Fund, the Rector is trying to arrange for some one to come from the Fund to speak to us about its mission and work.

Of course, study is another feature of Lent and the Course '**A Faith for Skeptics**' will begin on Wednesday 17th February after the evening Mass in the Parish Hall. Each session will last about one hour. Any adults seeking Confirmation are asked to attend this Course. This course will have four sessions during Lent and continue during Eastertide. In what is considered by some to be a secular and rational age it will help to show that Faith, and especially the Christian Faith, is not irrational at all.

In addition, the taking up of 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.

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

Parochial Church Council News: The PCC met on Thursday 21st January and discussed a number of items.

The PCC noted with delight that the Organ refurbishment is now complete and that the Diocesan Organ Advisor had inspected the organ and was of the opinion that we had got good value for money and identified no matters of serious concern. He has asked for a few things to be done, which amount to no more than an additional day's work. Two of the items he identified were not part of our contract with FH Browne and Sons. One is a repair to the organ blower which has a slight leak and the other is to

install an adjustable organist's bench (as not all organists are the same height of have the same leg measurements!). The PCC agreed to have these matters dealt with.

Mrs Salter reported that a good number of concerts were already booked for this year and even some for 2017. The PCC's new charging arrangement for concert ensures that both the Organ and Restoration Funds benefit from each concert.

There were no items of immediate concern on the fabric of either church. The PCC was delighted to learn that the faculty had been granted and received for the Disabled Access, Western Gallery Extension, Additional Toilet and Storeroom, Decoration of the Church, Replacement Seating, and insulation above the ceiling at St Mary & St Giles. The PCC were informed that a first planning meeting to start the process of appealing for grants had been arranged for yesterday afternoon.

Mr Salter reported that the floodlighting at St Mary & St Giles had now been repaired.

The Treasurer guided the PCC through the accounts for the end of the year and distributed draft accounts for 2015 in readiness for the March PCC Meeting at which it will need to "receive" the Accounts. Last year we managed to pay an additional amount of £5000 towards the Parish Share (the total paid was £34,000, which is unfortunately still far short of the £54,000 apportioned to us by the Milton Keynes Deanery Finance Committee. It was also reported that after the new sheds and path works had been completed at St Mary & St Giles the Restoration Fund would stand at about £45,000

It was agreed that in Lent this year we would support the Barnabas Fund, which helps persecuted Christians throughout the world.

Sister Janet had submitted a written report to the PCC on the initial responses to our Visiting Teams going out with the "Local Information Packs." The new residents visited so far have all been very appreciative that the Church is doing something so practical and helpful.

It was agreed that a copy of the display about the expanded parish should be erected at All Saints Church as well as St Mary & St Giles.

The Rector outlined some more of his thinking about the future impact of the four-fold increased in parish population on how the parish is run - following his article in the Parish Newsletter of 13th December 2015. The PCC will be considering this further over its next few meetings.

Mrs Salter reported on children's activities off premises, DBS matters and informed the PCC that a copy of its 'Children's Policy' was being personalised for All Saints Church as the new time of Mass there is starting to attract families and as the parish expands numbers may well grow.

Mr Salter had submitted a written report to the PCC on our Church School and highlighted a number of matters including that day's training session for the Full Governing Body on recruitment and retention of teachers and the pressures that lead to 25% of all newly qualified teachers leaving the profession after 5 years. Happily that is not the case at St Mary & St Giles.

The Rector reported that HM The Queen's 90th Birthday would be marked by a Flower Festival at SMSG. Mrs Salter has organised a Cream Teas event with music. The PCC agreed that the Beacon should be lit. The Rector will be organising special Services in both churches.

MASS TEXTS PROPER TO TODAY'S OBSERVANCE

In the name of the Father ☩ and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

Introduction to the celebration:

Dear Brethren, forty days have passed since we celebrated the joyful feast of the Nativity of the Lord. Today is the blessed day when Jesus was presented in the Temple by Mary and Joseph. Outwardly he was fulfilling the Law, but in reality he was coming to meet his believing people. Prompted by the Holy Spirit, Simeon and Anna came to the temple. Enlightened by the same Spirit, they recognised the Lord and confessed him with exultation. So let us also, gathered together by the Holy Spirit, proceed to the house of God to encounter Christ. There we shall find him and recognize him in the breaking of the bread, until he comes again, revealed in glory.

Let us pray. *The Celebrant blesses the candles:*

O God, source and origin of all light, who on this day showed to the just man Simeon the Light for revelation to the Gentiles, we humbly ask that, in answer to your people's prayers, you may be pleased to sanctify with your blessing ☩ these candles, which we are eager to carry in praise of your name, so that treading the path of virtue, we may reach the light that never fails. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

He then blesses them with Holy Water.

The Procession *During which this Canticle is sung:*

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, * according to thy word.

For mine eyes have seen * thy salvation,

Which thou hast prepared * before the face of all people;

To be a light to lighten the Gentiles, * and to be the glory of thy people Israel.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, * and to the Holy Spirit;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, * world without end. Amen.

The altar is venerated and the Celebrant goes to The Chair and the Mass continues with the Kyrie eleison:

The Collect

Almighty and ever-living God, we humbly implore your majesty that, just as your Only Begotten Son was presented on this day in the Temple in the substance of our flesh, so, by your grace, we may be presented to you with minds made pure. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, on God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD (SIT)

The First Reading

SMSG Reader: Isa Thomas

All Saints Reader: Rita Oakley

Malachi 3:1-4

Old Testament Page 802

The Responsorial Psalm

(from Psalm 24)

R/. Who is the king of glory? It is the Lord.

O gates, lift up your heads;
grow higher ancient doors.
Let him enter, the king of glory! ®

Who is the king of glory?
The Lord, the mighty, the valiant,
the Lord, valiant in war. ®

O gates, lift up your heads;
grow higher ancient doors.
Let him enter, the king of glory! ®

Who is he, the king of glory?
He, the Lord of armies,
he is the king of glory ®

Second Reading

Reader: Sister Janet

Hebrews 2:14-18

New Testament Page 185

Gospel Acclamation

(STAND)

Alleluia, alleluia!

The Lord has set me to preach good news to the poor,
to proclaim release to the captives.

Alleluia!

The Gospel

Luke 2:22-40

New Testament Pages 50

The Prayer of the Faithful

(Biddings: The Rector)

Priest: My brothers and sisters, let us pray to the Father through Christ who is our Light and Life.

Intercessor: Father, your Christ is acclaimed as the glory of Israel: Look in mercy on your Church, sharing his light.

V/. Lord, have mercy.

R/. Christ, have mercy.

Father, your Christ in his temple brings judgement on the world: Look in mercy on the nations, who long for his justice.

Father, your Christ, who was rich, for our sakes became poor: Look in mercy on the needy, suffering with him... 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 Matton, Cyril Millward, Capt John Richards CA, Shirley Scrutton, 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...*

Father, your Christ is the one in whom faithful servants find their peace: Look in mercy on the departed, who see your salvation... Caroline Adebiji, Lyn Butterworth, Gloria Dixey, Martha John, Iris McLennan, Susan de Mont, Joan Orchard, Mick Phillips, Jack Smith, Norman Stokes... and for those whose anniversaries of death occur at this time...**31st** William Perry, Richard Maycock, Alice Eales; **1st** Peter Willett, Robert Gillman, Eric Foskett; **2nd** Hugh Johnson; **3rd** Loretta Hindley; **4th** William Neal, Walter Potnter, Judith Heath, Arthur Webb **5th** Walter Taylor; **6th** Richard Perceval...

☩ Rest eternal grant to them, O Lord.

And let light perpetual shine upon them.

Father, your Christ is revealed as the one destined to be rejected: Look in mercy on us who now turn towards his passion

Priest: Lord God, you kept faith with Simeon and Anna and showed them the infant King. Give us grace to put all our trust in your promises, and the patience to wait for their fulfilment; we ask this through Christ the Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Reflection:

Who shall climb the mountain of the Lord? Who shall stand in holy place? The man with clean hands and pure heart, who desires not worthless things. He shall receive blessings from the Lord and reward from the God who saves him. (Ps 24)

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