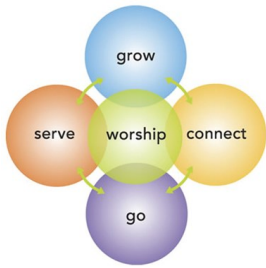


The Parish of
STONY STRATFORD
 with
CALVERTON



THE PARISH NEWSLETTER
THE FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT
SUNDAY 14th February 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)

Christ's voluntary self-mortification of forty days' fast, with its accompanying temptations, was but part of the self-mortification, with its climax on the Cross, which He gladly underwent for our salvation. He did not need to fast in order to keep the inclinations of the body in subjection. He did not need to allow the insult of temptation. He could have said, "begone Satan" at the beginning as easily and as effectively as He said it at the end. But He willingly underwent this humiliation in order to set us an example and to prove to us the infinite love He bears us and the value, the priceless value, He sets on our eternal salvation. He became like us in all things (except sin) in order to make it possible for us to become like Him—the beloved of his Father—and co-heirs with Him in the kingdom of heaven.

With this example given us by Christ no Christian can or should expect to travel the road to heaven without meeting obstacles and temptations. Our weak human nature is of itself, even without any external tempter, a source of many temptations to us, especially of those three illustrated in the case of Christ. Our body desires all the pleasures and comforts that can be got out of life and resents any curtailment of these desires even on the part of our Creator and Benefactor. Our gifts of intelligence and free-will often tempt most of us to look for power, political or economic, over our fellowmen. We want to be better off than others in this world, when our purpose in life is to help ourselves and our fellowmen to the better life. Finally, so fully occupied are many in the mad rush after pleasure and power that they have no time to devote to the one thing that matters, the attainment of eternal life.

Yet, through some foolish logic of our own, we expect God to do for us what we refuse to do for ourselves. We are tempting God by presuming he will save us if we have deliberately chosen the road to perdition.

There are few, if any, amongst us who can honestly say: "I am free from such inclinations or temptations." The vast majority of us can and should beat our breasts and say with the publican: "O God, be merciful to me a sinner." And merciful he will be if we turn to him with true humility. He may not remove all our temptations, all our wrong inclinations, but he will give us the grace to overcome them if we sincerely seek his aid.



THIS WEEK IN OUR PARISH

TODAY:
9:30am PARISH MASS at St Mary & St Giles
6:00pm 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 fidelity to Christ

Wednesday FERIA (Ember Day)
 11:00am Joint Meeting of Calverton Charities
 2:00pm The Fellowship meet in the Parish Hall
 6:00pm Parish Office Open to arrange:
 Banns, Marriages & Baptisms
 Handbell Ringing Practice at SMSG School
 6:15pm The Band - Practice at SMSG School
 7:30pm Stations of the Cross
7:30pm Mass at St Mary & St Giles
 8:00pm 'A Faith for Skeptics' in the Parish Hall
Pray for: For vocations to the Sacred Ministry

Thursday: FERIA
10:30am Mass at St Mary & St Giles
 12:30pm Lunchtime Concert with Jacob Collins
Pray for: For the homeless and refugees

Friday: FERIA (Ember Day)
8:00am Mass at St Mary & St Giles Church
 7:30pm Parish Singers Rehearsal
Pray for: For Bishop Jonathan

Saturday: FERIA
 4:00pm Confessions in St Mary & St Giles
 4:30pm Evening Prayer in St Mary & St Giles
Pray for: For Visitors to our Parish Churches

Next Sunday: THE SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT
9:30am PARISH MASS at St Mary & St Giles
11:00am. FAMILY MASS at All Saints
 4:00pm Lenten Motets & Readings
Pray for: Our Parish

READINGS NEXT SUNDAY
2nd Sunday of Lent
 1st Reading: Genesis 15: 5-12, 17-18
 Psalm: 27 (part)
 2nd Reading: Philippians 3:17 - 4:1
 Gospel: Luke 9:28b-36

Sidesmen Team 2
Altar Servers Team 3
Offertory Hazel Wallis
Cleaning Team 3
Gardening Team 3

Worshipping Numbers last Sunday: 175

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

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

Thursday, 18th February

12:30pm free Lunchtime Concert with Jacob Collins and his musical friends - a great half term treat, all ages welcome

Sunday 21st February

Masses as usual
4:00pm Lenten Motets & Meditations

Thursday 25th February

The first of four (one for each year group) 'Guided Masses' at our Church School

Thursday 3rd March

Milton Keynes Deanery Clergy Chapter

Saturday 5th March

St Mary & St Giles Church will be closed whilst a DVD Recording is made of the Pipe Organ being played.

Sunday 6th 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.

3:00pm 'Band' Concert in aid of Milton Keynes Foodbank
In St Mary & St Giles

Wednesday 9th March

Full Governors Meeting at SMSG School

Saturday 12th March

10:00am 'Musical Bite' Coffee Morning at SMSG with John Neal on the Pipe Organ

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 & Benediction at All Saints

The Real Easter Egg: if you would like to purchase Easter Eggs that tell the story of Holy Week and Easter, that are made with high quality, 'proper' chocolate, then please sign up on the freestanding notice board—in both our Parish Churches. There are three to choose from, all details on the board or see Lesley Salter. Orders by 28th February please!

Care for the Family is a Christian charity promoting and protecting all aspects family life. They are holding an evening for parents in Milton Keynes on Wednesday, 2nd March (see blue noticeboard and flyers). You would be sure to have an enlightening, inspirational and fun evening.

The Fellowship: this important group in the life of our parish started out as the 'Women's Fellowship' and then made the brave step of welcoming men into their fold. This provided a much needed boost to its life and vitality. This group is always on the lookout for new members, it is a group of men and women who meet together at 2:00pm, usually in the Parish Hall, on the third Wednesday of each month for fellowship and usually has a variety of engaging speakers and activities throughout the year - and most events seem to involve the consumption of food (!).

At its 17th February Meeting, after the speaker, the Rector will be joining with the Fellowship to plan its future. This would be a good meeting to come along and join, if you haven't done so far - as the Fellowship is looking to give itself a boost once more with new members and new ideas as to how it can best fulfil its part in the life and mission of our parish.

'A FAITH FOR SKEPTICS'

"People commonly assume that skepticism is the enemy of faith, and faith the cure for skepticism, that you cannot have one without losing the other. Like heat and cold, knowledge and ignorance, good and evil, they are thought to be contradictories.

But faith, if it is the right kind of faith, and skepticism, if it is skeptical about the right things, are not really contradictories. Like convex and concave, masculine and feminine, conversion and repentance, you cannot have one without the other."

John H Heidt

17th February: 'The Case of the Disappearing Atheists'
24th February: 'Anonymous Agnostics'
2nd March: 'Dangerous Dogmas'
16th March 'A Misplaced Skepticism'

This Course will surprise you. Each session will last no more than an hour and is designed to allow time for questions - of which I am sure there will be many!

Wednesday's at 8pm in the Parish Hall

Lent, Holy Week & Easter 2016

Each Wednesday evening in Lent will form the mid-week focus of our Prayer, Study and Devotions.

At 7:00pm Stations of the Cross will be celebrated each week, with a different set of meditations each week. As usual the first celebration will use the traditional meditations by St Alphonsus Liguori.

PARISH NEWS AND NOTICES



At 7:30pm our usual evening Mass continues with readings and 'propers' for Lent.

At 8:00pm in the Parish Hall the course '**A Faith for Skeptics**' will be held.

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).

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.

All Saints Scrubology Day: Thursday March 17th - please come along and help the merry band at All Saints give the church a spring-clean in preparation for Holy Week & Easter. *Thank you.*

Sainsbury's 'Active Kids' Vouchers: If you shop regularly at Sainsbury's then please do collect the 'Active Kids' vouchers and hand them to Kieran or Lesley Salter as they will help our Church School obtain sports equipment. If the person in front of you in the queue declines them...please don't be shy in speaking up and saying that you know of a school that would appreciate them and asking if they mind letting you have them. *Thank you.*

Passenham Church Open Day: Our friends at St Guthlacs, Passenham are holding an Open Day on Easter Monday, 28th March, from 11:00 am until 4:00pm. On the 23rd and 24th April they are also holding a Flower Festival to mark Her Majesty the Queen's 90th Birthday with the church opening on both days from 11:00 am until 4:00pm.

Expansion Area News: Once more our intrepid Parish Visitors have been out and about knocking on doors, welcoming people to the parish and handing out the Local Information Packs. So far these have been very well received, and we are receiving really positive feedback from a variety of sources as to the professional nature of

the packs and the care with which we are taking to actually speak to new residents rather than simply posting them through the doors. There have also been a further five or six packs given out to new residents who have moved into existing housing stock within the parish over the past month or so.

Currently there are three house building companies selling houses. Although at least two of them have nothing left to sell - even those they have not built yet have been sold! Shortly a fourth house-builder is about to open its sales office at the southern boundary of the parish and an existing house-builder will soon be opening a second sales office. Staff at these offices have been and are really helpful in assisting us with knowing which houses are now occupied. Please pray for our Parish Visitors and for those new residents that they visit throughout the parish.

IMPORTANT: if someone moves into an empty house near you do let Sister Janet know - for, as you will see from the above, the Local Information Packs are not just for the new housing areas, but for all new residents.

St Mary & St Giles' Churchyard News: As you will have noticed the churchyard path has been repaired and the verges made straight and firm, and the hard standing and path has been put in place in preparation for the additional garden shed that we have planning and faculty consent for. The present shed has given us very long service, but has become somewhat dilapidated of late. The plan is that the new shed site will have the new 'Gardeners Shed' and that the existing site will have a shed to contain all the things that we use in church, but do not store in the church, such as the extra tables, the outdoor crib and a number of other items. In order to free up a significant space in the Parish Hall it is also planned to store many of the additional chairs in this shed as well. As part of the work a conduit was laid to both shed sites to enable power to be available in both sheds for light and, in the case of the shed in which the padded chairs will be stored, a residual heater for use in the winter months to help deter damage to the chairs from damp conditions. The new sheds should arrive within the next few weeks.

Furthermore, the Rector, having received representations from both the management company and tenants of the neighbouring properties in Church Mews, as well as parishioners who have found themselves slipping and sliding owing to pigeons taking a shine to perching in the trees above the path, brought the matter of the trees to the attention of the PCC at its last meeting.

From time to time we have had to prune trees in the churchyard due to the potential for damage to neighbouring properties, but previously Local Authority Arboricultural Officers have only been prepared to approve light pruning to the trees. At the time we pointed out that this would create problems in a few years' time, but the Officers were not prepared to agree to a scheme that would adequately reduce the potential for damage to property and, of course, in preventing people slipping and falling.

The PCC agreed that works to the trees were very necessary and agreed that the Rector and Mr Graham Brown should seek a meeting with the current Arboricultural Officer for MK Council. That meeting should take place shortly and representatives of neighbouring properties will be present at that meeting to ensure that the Officer is made fully aware of the need for a thorough scheme of works.

MASS TEXTS PROPER TO TODAY'S OBSERVANCE

Reflection prior to Mass

This Sunday we start our Lenten journey to Easter. It is a time of prayer, fasting and almsgiving, reflecting on all God has done for us especially through the death and resurrection of Jesus. It is also a time of penance when we try to turn away from the roots of our sinfulness and in so doing we grow in the life of love. Throughout our Christian pilgrimage we try to live the process of Jesus passion: death to all that is not for God and an open blossoming of the life of love, the very life-blood of Jesus resurrection.

The Collect

Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ fasted forty days in the wilderness, and was tempted as we are, yet without sin: give us grace to discipline ourselves in obedience to your Spirit; and, as you know our weakness, so may we know your power to save; 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: Pat Eales

All Saints Reader: Eilish Fiedman

Deuteronomy 26:4-10

Old Testament Page 149

The Responsorial Psalm

(from Psalm 91)

R/. I will bless you, O Lord.

I thank you, Lord, with all my heart,
you have heard the words of my mouth.
Before the angels I will bless you.
I will adore before your holy temple. ®

I thank you for your faithfulness and love
which excel all we ever knew of you.
On the day I called, you answered;
you increased the strength of my soul. ®

All earth's kings shall thank you
when they hear the words of your mouth.
They shall sing of the Lord's ways:
'How great is the glory of the Lord!' ®

You stretch out your hand and save me,
Your hand will do all things for me.
Your love, O Lord, is eternal,
discard not the work of your hands. ®

Second Reading

Reader: Anna Page

Romans 10:8-13

New Testament Page 133

Gospel Acclamation

(STAND)

Glory to you, Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ.

Man does not live on bread alone,
but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.

Glory to you, Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ.

The Gospel

Luke 4:1-13

New Testament Pages 52

The Prayer of the Faithful

(Biddings: Matthew Lucas)

Priest: My brothers and sisters, let us pray to the Lord for courage to give up distractions and to give ourselves to him this Lent.

Intercessor: Give your Church the courage to give up her preoccupation with herself and to give more time to the mission of Christ the Redeemer. (*We pray for N our bishop and . . .*) May the blood and water flowing from the side of Jesus bring forgiveness to your people and help us to face the cost of proclaiming salvation.

V/. Lord, meet us in the silence:

R/. give us strength and hear our prayer.

Give your world the courage to give up war, bitterness and hatred, and to seek peace. (*We pray for . . .*) May the shoulders of the risen Jesus, once scourged by soldiers, bear the burden of political and military conflict in our world.

Give us the courage to give up quarrels, strife and jealousy in our families, neighbourhoods and communities. (*We pray for . . .*) May the presence of the risen Jesus, his body once broken and now made whole, bring peace and direction as we live with one another.

Give us the courage to give up our selfishness as we live for others, and to give time, care and comfort to the sick. (*We pray for . . .* Wendy, Fiddy Abraham, Anna Archer, Maggie Baker, Mary Barry, Henry Blake, Richard Coley, Richard D'Souza, Gill Edwards, Sue Gower, Russell Herbert, Paul, Rebecca, Magnus John, Kay Lucas, Isaac Lyon, Sue Maton, Cyril Millward, Capt John Richards CA, Shirley Scrutton, Alma Steinmetz, Fr Edmund, June Wilde, Janis Williams, Marian Wright) May the wounded hands of Jesus bring his healing touch, and the light of his presence be with them.

Give us the courage to give up our fear of death and to rejoice with those who have died in faith. (*We pray for...* Violet Moulds, Norman Stokes... and for those whose anniversaries of death occur at this time...**14th** David Millar, Judith Heath; **15th** Harold Lane, Sylvia Clarke; **16th** Maud Richardson, Molly Foxley, Albert Orton, Reuben Underwood; **17th** Dorothy Blundell, Winifred Berrill; **18th** Noah Neal, Joseph Wilsher; **19th** Melville Somerton, Malcolm Ward...) May the feet of the risen Lord Jesus, once nailed to the cross, walk alongside the dying and bereaved in their agony, and walk with us and all your Church through death to the gate of glory.

✠ Rest eternal grant to them, O Lord.

And let light perpetual shine upon them.

Priest: Lord, meet us in the silence: **give us strength and hear our prayer, here and in eternity. Amen.**

Communion Reflection:

Lord Jesus, you have given us yourself under the humble sign of bread and wine, bread for our strength and wine for our joy. Yet, you knew the hunger of the desert temptation, the sorrow of Satan's presence, the isolation of the wilderness. Show us, Lord, the riches we have in you. Open the eyes of our hearts to see with compassion those who have no bread, no fellowship and little joy. Melt our indifference to the many who starve and shiver in our world of fullness. *"As often as you did it to one of these, you did it to me."*

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