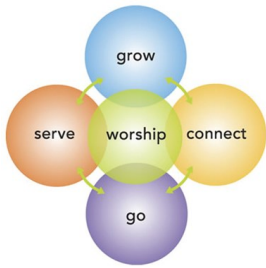


The Parish of  
**STONY STRATFORD**  
 with  
**CALVERTON**



**THE PARISH NEWSLETTER**  
**THE SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT**  
**SUNDAY 21st 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)*

It was out of the abundance of his divine love that God gave a glimpse of the future glory of Christ in his risen humanity to the three disciples on that memorable occasion. And with Christ he showed two others of his faithful servants also in glory. He understood the human weakness of the disciples, and foresaw the shock to their faith which the sad scenes of the passion and crucifixion of their beloved Master would be some weeks later. So, to strengthen and forearm them for that sad trial, he gave them a glimpse of the future glory which was to be theirs, too, if they persevered.

It is for this same reason that this all-important event in the life of Christ and of his Apostles has been preserved for us in the Gospels and is put before us today. Like the Apostles, we, too, believe firmly in God. We, too, are convinced that Christ was sent by God to bring us to heaven. We now have much more convincing proof that Christ was not only the Messiah, an envoy of God, but the very Son of God—something the Apostles did not then understand. But we are still very like them in our human weakness, and in our half-hearted acceptance of God's purpose for and promises to us.

The Apostles had to face the awful test to their faith and trust in God, which the passion and crucifixion of Christ was for them. We now accept with gratitude and realize that Christ "had to suffer and thus enter into his glory." We even understand that the very purpose of Christ's passion was that, in spite of our mortality and weakness, we also might enter into eternal glory through his suffering, on condition that we remain true to our faith.

In our moments of cool, calm reasoning we can see clearly how good God has been to us, how wonderful his love which has arranged for us an eternity of happiness, the perfect fulfilment of every rational human desire. We can also see how little God asks of us during our few short years here, in return for the everlasting happy home he has prepared for us.

But unfortunately we have many moments in life in which cool, calm reasoning does not prevail. We have moments when our vices and not our virtues



take charge, moments when we are prepared to sell our eternal heritage in exchange for a mess of earthly pottage. Some of us may already have bartered our heavenly home for some temporal gain or pleasure—but while there is life there is hope. We can still put things right with God.

"Lord, it is good for us to be here"; it is wonderful to be adopted children of God on the road back to our Father. It is wonderful to be assured that in death this body of ours with its pains and aches, its attraction to earthly things and worse still its propensity to sin, will give place to a glorified body. This glorified body will be free from all pain and corruption and will possess all the human spiritual gifts of intelligence and will to so much greater a degree as will enable us to appreciate and enjoy the eternal happiness in store for us.

**THIS WEEK IN OUR PARISH**

**TODAY:**  
**9:30am**  
**6:00pm**  
 Pray for: **THE SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT**  
**PARISH MASS at St Mary & St Giles**  
**FAMILY MASS at All Saints**  
 Our Parish

**Monday:**  
**9:30am**  
**8:00pm**  
 Pray for: **The Chair of St Peter, Apostle**  
 'Squeals on Wheels' in Parish Hall  
 Bell Ringing Practice  
 The Sick, Housebound & Handicapped

**Tuesday:**  
**10:30am**  
 Pray for: **Feria**  
**Mass at All Saints + 'Eleveses'**  
 For fidelity to Christ

**Wednesday** **Feria**  
 6:00pm  
 Parish Office Open to arrange:  
 Banns, Marriages & Baptisms  
 Handbell Ringing Practice at SMSG School  
 6:15pm  
 7:30pm  
 7:00pm  
 The Band - Practice at SMSG School  
 Stations of the Cross  
**7:30pm**  
**8:00pm**  
 Pray for: **Mass at St Mary & St Giles**  
 'A Faith for Skeptics' in the Parish Hall  
 For vocations to the Sacred Ministry

**Thursday:** **Feria**  
 9:00am  
**10:30am**  
 Pray for: **Mass for Y6 in St Mary & St Giles School**  
**Mass at St Mary & St Giles**  
 For the homeless and refugees

**Friday:** **Feria**  
**8:00am**  
 7:30pm  
 Pray for: **Mass at St Mary & St Giles Church**  
 Parish Singers Rehearsal  
 For Bishop Jonathan

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

**Next Sunday: THE THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT**  
**9:30am**  
**11:00am.**  
 Pray for: **PARISH MASS at St Mary & St Giles**  
**FAMILY MASS at All Saints**  
 Our Parish

**READINGS NEXT SUNDAY**  
**3rd 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 3  
 Altar Servers Team 4  
 Offertory Daniel & Louise Mullins  
 Cleaning Team 4  
 Gardening Team 3

Worshipping Numbers last Sunday: 112

# 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

### 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. It is 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:** at its meeting last week committed itself to continuing its vital work in our Parish Family of serving our Parish and continuing to provide much needed fellowship and support to our senior members.

Having discussed the leadership of the group the Fellowship agreed with the Rector's suggestion that the Committee rather than have a Chairman/woman and a Secretary simply agree at each of its meetings which members were going to undertake specific tasks. In this way the running and organisation of the group would be a shared responsibility and the onus would not fall on one or two people. The Rector will be meeting with the committee within the next couple of weeks to take things forward.

In the meantime the Fellowship looks forward to welcoming as many new members as possible and invites everyone to join them for its Service of Devotions on Holy Wednesday (23rd March) at 2:00pm in church followed by light refreshments.

## '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

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

**Stations of the Cross:** Each Wednesday in Lent at 7:00pm - come and join this popular act of devotion as we seek to keep even closer to Jesus during Lent.

**All Saints Church Singing Practice:** Lesley Salter has very kindly offered to give us two singing lessons on Mondays February 29th and March 7th between 7-8pm in All Saints Church, to help boost our confidence and volume!

**Women's World Day of Prayer:** will be held this year in the Church Hall at St Mary Magdalene's Catholics Church beginning at 10:30am on Friday 4th March. All welcome.

# PARISH NEWS AND NOTICES



**Mothering Sunday Posies:** I am delighted to be able to tell you that Messrs Willis are once more donating the daffodils for the posies. Sister Janet would welcome offers of help from those willing to make up the posies. This will take place at 9:30am on Saturday 5th March in St Mary & St Giles Church.

**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.

**2015 Advent Appeal:** The Trustees of SANDS have confirmed that a total of **£1041.29** was raised from our fundraising. "Thank you from us all here at Sands for all your efforts; without people like you we would struggle to continue the important work we do. With very best wishes, SANDS Fundraising and Events Team."

**Collection for Fr Benjamin:** Thank you everyone who donated a total of £245.70 to the leaving gift for Fr Benjamin.

**"To share in all good things done among us..."** Modern life seems to move a long at a frenetic pace. The number of commuters to London very early each morning that I see just a few times a year are a daily Monday to Friday occurrence for many, many people. And add to that the journey time to get across London and the same amount of time spent on getting home each day - and we can well appreciate just how exhausted some of us are. Having said that there are those of us who work locally who similarly have huge work commitments and who also arrive home exhausted.

Then there are those of us who may be retired, but what with voluntary work (without which much good charitable work would never happen and people would suffer) and supporting our children by providing care for grandchildren and ferrying them in 'Grannie's Taxi' again people often wonder how they found time to work.

There is so much that all of us feel called to do, that we feel we deserve a break, some time off...a lie in. "The Lord won't mind, will he?" Well.....perhaps the fact we ask ourselves that is the answer itself. We know that he will miss us. Sunday Mass is the time we have to truly encounter him and refresh our relationship with him. But I wonder if we are looking at this the wrong way?

In our longing for a lie in, a break, or time off we are perhaps understandably, thinking of our own needs, but are they our deepest needs?

Personally, I don't think they are. If we are looking for refreshment or time to recharge the batteries to wind down in order to be fit enough to face it all again next

week then we need something far more than a lie in, a break or time off.

To be truly refreshed and renewed we need God's grace as given to us in the Blessed Sacrament and through the proclamation of the Word. In our own strength we are not able to achieve for long all that is demanded of us. We may think we can do things without the grace of Christ, but we soon discover that to truly be a Christian in the world of work and indeed in any context of life we need far more than our own strength. As St Paul reminds us: "*Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, do; and the God of peace will be with you. I rejoice in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me; you were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. Not that I complain of want; for I have learned, in whatever state I am, to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and want. I can do all things in him who strengthens me*" (Philippians 4:8-13).

I often feel sorry for those who try to live denying their need of God's grace, and am always reminded of what a sad state of affairs this must be when we sing the last two lines of the hymn 'Come down O love divine' - "For none can guess his grace, till he become the place, wherein the Holy Spirit makes his dwelling."

Of course, as well as coming to Mass and receiving grace, we also gain strength and encouragement from each other to live the Christian life. In-habitual worship was described to me, by the late and much loved Derek Savage, as "the national disease." He was concerned at its rate of infection and its future effects on our parish. It may be that he was right to be concerned for like many who were formed as Christians in former times he knew just how important it was, if one wanted to love Jesus and live the Christian Life, to be at Mass each Sunday.

There are so many good things done among us, but without the commitment to Sunday Mass each of them is without purpose...rudderless. For the Mass is both the culmination of the week past and the much needed grace-fuelled celebration for the week ahead.

There are many groups in parishes, in ours no less than others, but each group cannot be an end in itself. Each parish group must have a charism...a particular gift or ministry that contributes to the life of the whole parish. I want to spend some time with each of the groups in our parish this year with the members of each of them considering what its Charism is and how it contributes to the life of the whole parish. Without this vision and its charism being exercised for the good of the parish there is a risk of going off at tangents. *Where there is no vision, the people perish* (Proverbs 29:18)

*"Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near"* (Hebrews 10:23-25)."

# MASS TEXTS PROPER TO TODAY'S OBSERVANCE

## Reflection prior to Mass

*In the Mass we remember the death of the Lord until he comes in glory. The two aspects of the Easter mystery are necessary. Both form part of God's design. Today's gospel of the Transfiguration places before us the picture of the Lord, accompanied by two great witnesses of the Old Testament and filled with the glory which he had before the world began. In the midst of this triumphant scenario the topic of conversion is Jesus' Passion. As we celebrate Mass today and bring the joys and sorrows of life to God, we offer them together with Jesus' offering. If we have part in his suffering we will have a share in his glory. Both are intertwined in God's plan.*

## The Collect

Almighty Father, whose Son was revealed in majesty before he suffered death upon the cross: give us grace to perceive his glory, that we may be strengthened to suffer with him and be changed into his likeness, from glory to glory; 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: Jonathan Dunn

Genesis 15:5-12,17-18

Old Testament Page 10

### The Responsorial Psalm

(from Psalm 27)

#### **R/. The Lord is my light and my help.**

The Lord is my light and my help;  
whom shall I fear?

The Lord is the stronghold of my life;  
before whom shall I shrink? ®

O Lord, hear my voice when I call;  
have mercy and answer.

Of you my heart has spoken:  
'Seek his face.' ®

It is your face, O Lord, that I seek;  
hide not your face.

Dismiss not your servant in anger;  
you have been my help. ®

I am sure I shall see the Lord's goodness  
in the land of the living.

Hope in him, hold firm and take heart.  
Hope in the Lord! ®

### Second Reading

Reader: Rosie Page

Philippians 3:17-4:1

New Testament Page 166

### Gospel Acclamation

(STAND)

#### **Glorify 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.

#### **Glorify to you, Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ.**

### The Gospel

Luke 9:28-36

New Testament Pages 59

### The Prayer of the Faithful

(Biddings: Fr Tunji)

Priest: My brothers and sisters, we should pray at all

times, but especially during this season of Lent: we should faithfully keep watch with Christ, so let us pray to our heavenly Father.

*Intercessor:* That Christians everywhere may be responsive to the word of God during this holy season....., let us pray to the Lord:

V/. Lord, hear us.

R/. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

That people everywhere may work for peace to make these days the acceptable time of God's help and salvation....., let us pray to the Lord:

That all who have sinned or grown lukewarm may turn to God again during this time of reconciliation....., let us pray to the Lord:

That we ourselves may learn to repent and turn from sin with all our hearts....., let us pray to the Lord:

That the sick and suffering may be given grace and strength, especially...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, Ray Lewis, Kay Lucas, Isaac Lyon, Sue Maton, Cyril Millward, Capt John Richards CA, Shirley Scrutton, Alma Steinmetz, Fr Edmund, June Wilde, Janis Williams, 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...*, let us pray to the Lord:

That the faithful departed, especially...Mick Lang, Violet Moulds, Norman Stokes, Sylvia Storer, Glyn Wyatt...and for those whose anniversaries of death occur during this week...**22<sup>nd</sup>** Isao Iwase, Rose Shillingford; **23<sup>rd</sup>** Wendy Herbert, John Payne (Priest), John Barnes; **24<sup>th</sup>** Les Mathers, Jeffrey Coles, George Parsons, Violet Wright; **25<sup>th</sup>** Dulcie Chown, Charles Tracey, Emma Read, Eva Tomkins, Duncan Aird; **26<sup>th</sup>** Sarah Shillingford; **27<sup>th</sup>** Ellen Baker... that they may enjoy the blessed vision of divine glory for ever, let us pray to the Lord:

✕ Rest eternal grant to them, O Lord.

**And let light perpetual shine upon them.**

*Priest:* Lord, may your people turn again to you and serve you with all their hearts. With confidence we have asked your help: may we now know your mercy and love in our lives. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **Communion Reflection:**

*As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes. Indeed, our receiving of the Lord in Holy Communion does show our faith in the power of his death and resurrection. But it is also food for a journey, a journey through the highways and byways of life's many different circumstances. Along that road, our behaviour, our conduct, ourselves, we are the signposts that proclaim our Way, who is truth and life, who died that we might have life and have it more abundantly.*

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