

MASS TEXTS PROPER TO TODAY'S OBSERVANCE

Reflection prior to Mass

The Lections of the Mass today put before us the contrast of poverty and riches. In a world united by television and other means of communication it is no news to us that there is dire need in our universe, as well as great wealth. The two extremes exist even side by side in some parts of the world. Even in our own immediate surroundings we find instances of both. Today's liturgy invites us to look at the place of material prosperity in our lives and to re-evaluate our attitudes in the light of the gospel.

The Collect

Eternal God, you crown the year with your goodness and you give us the fruits of the earth in their season: grant that we may use them to your glory, for the relief of those in need and for our own well-being; 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 Amos 6:1a,4-7
 SMSG Reader: Margery Shaw Old Testament Page 770
 All Saints Reader: Rita Oakley

The Responsorial Psalm (from Psalm 146)

R/. My soul, give praise to the Lord.

It is the Lord who keeps faith for ever, who is just to those who are oppressed. It is he who gives bread to the hungry, the Lord, who sets prisoners free. ®

It is the Lord who gives sight to the blind, who raises up those who are bowed down. It is the Lord who loves the just, the Lord, who protects the stranger. ®

He upholds the widow and orphan but thwarts the path of the wicked. The Lord will reign for ever, Zion's God, from age to age. ®

Second Reading 1 Timothy 6:11-16
 Reader: Lydia Jones New Testament Page 178

Gospel Acclamation (STAND)

Alleluia, alleluia!
 Though Jesus Christ was rich,
 yet for your sake he became poor;
 so that by his poverty, you might become rich.
Alleluia!

The Gospel Luke 16:19-31
 New Testament Pages 68

The Prayer of the Faithful (Biddings: Dai Evans)

Priest:
 Brothers and sisters, we gather at this time of Harvest Thanksgiving to give praise for all we have received from our heavenly Father's bountiful goodness. Let us bring

our prayers to the Lord, who works with us in the gathering in the harvest.

Intercessor:
 For farmers, fishermen and for all whose work helps to put food on our tables, that they may see the Creator's hand at work in all that they do.

Lord, hear us.
Lord, graciously hear us.

For all those, in the food industry, or at home, who transport our food, prepare it and serve it for us, that they may know their role in God's plan for the world.

For all those who suffer from hunger and thirst in many countries, that there may be a fairer distribution of the earth's resources and that those with plenty may never fail to share.

For the members of our community who are in any kind of need, especially the sick... Fiddy Abraham, Anna Archer, Henry Blake, Steve Cooper, Eileen Cox, Margaret Hooton, William Leese, Terry Mason, Sue Maton, Pete, Tony Oakley, Shirley Scrutton, Wendy, Marian Wright... that they may come to know God's care through his sharing in our words and deeds.

For those who have died recently... Melvyn Woodhouse... and for all whose anniversary of death occurs during this week...**26th** Susan Whelan, Gweneth Stock; **28th** Hannah Bull, Emily Ransley, Anne Morgan; **29th** Vernon Haysman, Mary Parkinson; **30th** Jennifer Barford; **1st Sept** Mary Read, Henrietta Larman, Christopher Brittain, Francis Halliwell... that at the ingathering of the harvest of souls at the end of time they may share joyfully in the banquet of heaven.

✠ Rest eternal grant to them, O Lord.
And let light perpetual shine upon them.

In silence let us bring before our heavenly Father our own cares and concerns, our joys and sorrows; and let us beseech the Lord that we may offer an acceptable sacrifice::

Priest:
 God our Father, you never fail to provide for all your creatures: hear the prayers we make in faith and trust, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Communion Reflection:

Lazarus would have filled himself with the scraps that fell from the rich man's table. He longed for something to ease the pangs of hunger that gnawed at him. In comparison with him we are so blessed. We sit here at the table of the Lord, filled not with scraps, but with the finest of wheat, the bread of life, the Flesh of Jesus. This banquet is set for all mankind. How great is our Father who has brought us to share fellowship with himself and his beloved Son.



THE PARISH NEWSLETTER
THE 26th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
SUNDAY 25th September 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"

All the parables of our Lord are based on everyday events. While we hope and pray that the case of the rich man described here is not an everyday occurrence, we cannot doubt but that such cases have happened and will happen again. This rich man is not in eternal torments because he was rich, but because he let his wealth become his master and forgot God and his neighbour and his own real welfare, which is eternal life. There are people like him in our world today, those who completely ignore their real future. While they are convinced that their stay on this earth is of very short duration and that they will have to leave it very, very soon, they still act and live as if they had a permanent home here.

This is true not only of those who try (ineffectively most probably) to keep from their minds all thought of a future life, but even of some who openly profess to be Christians and who recite so often the words of the Creed: "I believe in the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come." Yet, they are so busy trying to get the wealth and the pleasures of this life, or to increase all they have of them already, that they haven't a moment to spare for the thing that really matters-their future unending life after death.

God forbid that any of us should be numbered amongst these foolish people, for there is no greater folly on earth than to miss the real and only purpose in life because of a few trivial, passing attractions. We are not forbidden to have some of this world's goods. We need some, and God it was who provided them for our use. But we must use them wisely rather than set them up as idols to be adored. On all sides of us there are 'Lazaruses' placed at our gates by God to give us an opportunity to exercise fraternal charity. If we are a true brother or sister to them now, we will not have to envy them hereafter.

If on the other hand your lot is that of a Lazarus, and there are many whose life is one long, continual struggle against poverty, disease and hardship - we must recall that envy of our neighbour and rebellion against God will only add to, and do not cure, our ills.



THIS WEEK IN OUR PARISH

TODAY: 26th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
HARVEST THANKSGIVING

9:30am PARISH MASS at St Mary & St Giles
6:00pm EVENSONG at All Saints
 Followed by a 'Bring & Share' Supper.

Pray for: Our Parish

Monday: Ss Cosmas & Damian, Martyrs

9:30am 'Squeals on Wheels' in Parish Hall
 8:00pm Bell Ringing Practice
 Pray for: the Sick, Housebound and Disabled

Tuesday: St Vincent de Paul, Priest

10:30am Mass at All Saints + 'Elevesens'
 Pray for: The Churches work amongst the poor

Wednesday: St Wenceslaus, Martyr

6:30pm Handbell Ringing Practice at SMSG School
 7:15pm The Band - Practice at SMSG School
7:30pm Mass at St Mary & St Giles
 Pray for: the Church in the Czech Republic

Thursday: SS Michael, Gabriel & Raphael, Archangels

10:30am Mass at St Mary & St Giles
 Pray for: Angelic Assistance & Protection

Friday: St Jerome, Priest & Doctor
8:00am Mass at St Mary & St Giles School

7:30pm Parish Singers Rehearsal
 Pray for: Biblical Scholars

Saturday: St Therese of the Child Jesus

4:00pm Confessions at St Mary & St Giles
4:30pm Evening Prayer at St Mary & St Giles
 7:30pm Concert at St Mary & St Giles
 Pray for: Visitors to our Parish Churches, and for all the spiritual development of all children

NEXT SUNDAY: 27th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
(Holy Guardian Angels)

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

READINGS NEXT SUNDAY:

1st Reading: Amos 6:1a, 4-7
 Psalm: 146 (part)
 2nd Reading: 1 Timothy 6: 11-16
 Gospel: Luke 16: 19-31

Sidesmen Team 4 Altar Servers Team 4
 Offertory Jean Hulley
 Cleaning Team 4 Gardening Team 3

Worshipping Numbers last Sunday: 115
 Weekday Worshipping Numbers (w/e 17th Sept): 25

Rector: Fr Ross Northing SSC - Tel: 01908 562148
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Church Army Officer: Sister Janet Northing CA - Tel: 01908 562148
 Email: jf.northing@btinternet.com

Parish Website: www.parishstonystatfordcalverton.com

Associate Minister: Fr Tunji Adebiyi
 Tel: 01525 790954

Honorary Assistant Priest: Fr Joseph Loveday SSC
 Tel: 01327 351511

Parish Hall Booking Secretary: Nicola Crompton

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.



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 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.



Reception of Holy Communion: All Baptised and Confirmed Christians are encouraged to receive Holy Communion. If you are unwell or uncertain about receiving the Precious Blood please do still receive the Host. Our Chalice Assistants are not authorised to permit the intincting (dipping) of the Host.



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

Tuesday 27th September

Rector meets with the Area Dean re Mission Post

Saturday 1st October

7:30pm Small String Orchestra Concert at SMSG

Tuesday 4th October

11:30am All Saints Fabric Committee Meeting in church
2pm Church Craft Group at the Rectory

Thursday 6th October

7:00pm Greater Access Project Group meeting

Saturday 8th October

10am Coffee Morning at SMSG

Wednesday 12th October

SMSG School Open Day
All Welcome

Thursday 13th October

12:30pm School Merger Meeting

Sunday 16th October

3:00pm Autumn Concert

Wednesday 19th October

2:00pm The Fellowship

Thursday 20th October

12:30pm Lunchtime Concert at SMSG

Saturday 22nd October

10:00am Musical Bite Coffee Morning

Saturday 29th October

7:30pm Organ Recital

Tuesday 1st November

ALL SAINTS DAY

10:30am Mass at All Saints

Wednesday 2nd November

ALL SOULS DAY

9:30am Mass at SMSG

10:30am Mass at All Saints

7:30pm Sung Mass at SMSG

Saturday 12th November

10:00am Choral Day at SMSG Church

Sunday 13th November

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

9:30am Parish Mass
11:00am Family Mass
3:00pm Act of Remembrance at the War Memorial

Monday 14th November

12:30pm School Merger Meeting

Calverton Fete: Thank you to everyone who helped with the Open Day & Fete at All Saints last Sunday be it through donating items for sale, helping to set up or clear away, running stalls, buying merchandise or by playing music as part of the Band! The result was fantastic, not only raising £2254 for the All Saints Restoration Fund but also reaching people in the new Development within the Parish "who came to see" and from which a Baptism of a new born child is to be arranged.

In order to improve how we do things, please come to a short meeting at All Saints, on Tuesday September 13th at 7 pm and share how we could do things even better. Fr Ross.

The results of this year's Fete are as follows:

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|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Books | £81.80 |
| Bric a brac | £126.60 |
| Coconut shy | £61 |
| Cosmetics | £98.60 |
| Hook a Duck | £79.48 |
| Raffle | £1930 |
| Guess the Cake Weight | £6.50 |
| Splat the Rat | £30.40 |
| Teas | £354 |
| Plants | £61.60 |
| Tombola | £198.40 |
| Wine or lose | £151.95 |
| Cakes | £73.80 |
| Skittles | £93.00 |
| Tower Tours | £188 |
| Crafts | £173 |
| Donations | £283.68 |
| Total: | £2254.81 |

Retirement: after considerable prayer and thought our Organist, John Neal, has decided that it is time for him to retire. John has kindly given the Rector an assurance that he will serve three months notice and so his final Sunday will be on the 30th October which gives us some time to see if we can appoint a new organist and/or choirmaster. Obviously, we will want to mark John's retirement nearer the time. The PCC is currently advertising for a new organist and your prayers for a suitable person to be appointed are requested.

Church Craft Group: Sister Janet will be hosting a meeting of the Craft Group at 2:00pm on Tuesday 4th October in preparation for the Christmas Fayre on 'Lights' Switch on Day (which this year is on 26th Nov). Thank you to all those who work hard through the year making things to sell on the stall. New members are always welcome. Please see Sister Janet for further details.

Homelessness: we cannot fail but we are aware of the group of homeless people who have emerged over the past few weeks in the churchyard at St Mary & St Giles. I have talked with them and given them advice as to where they can get help, but this advice has not been taken up, which is regrettable. I have contacted social services, the Town Council, fellow clergy who have experienced similar problems and the Archdeacon. The police have become involved, but will not intervene as the churchyard is private land. Social Services have agreed to send someone to visit to talk with the people in the churchyard, but they are stretched and cannot give me an indication of when they might visit, but have promised to keep me informed (although at the time of going to print they had not done so). Milton Keynes Council seem, according to reports received, to regard this as the responsibility of others.

We must pay tribute to Tony Price and all the members of his Gardening Teams, who despite the foul waste being deposited each day are faithfully trying to keep the churchyard clean and tidy in what are very difficult and trying circumstances. I am sure they would appreciate your support and/or offers of help.

In other parts of the country where this has been a problem, clergy who have asked the homeless to move out of

PARISH NEWS AND NOTICES

their churchyards have faced negative reports in the local and national media, as well as receiving hate mail. On the other hand there are those who expect me, as the Rector, to be able to deal with this - "as it is your problem." In reality, of course, it is society's problem and therefore a problem for all of us.

Meanwhile the homeless are still...homeless! And this is a problem that many clergy, myself included, think will only get worse.

In times past there were large hostels for the homeless run by the Salvation Army and indeed, our own Church Army. With regard to the latter it is a matter of huge regret that short-sighted policies by those charities that took them off Church Army's hands have led to a reduction in the amount of bed-space available for homeless people. There are those who want to blame successive political parties in Government for the situation, but homelessness is a far more complicated problem and simply blaming it on Government policies only serves to allow certain parties to avoid their own responsibilities.

The housing shortage is forcing prices up, and only this week I learnt from a reputable source that the large housebuilders are 'managing' the supply of houses. By keeping the numbers being built within a given amount they are able to keep prices high by demand outstripping supply. This is in turn forcing people into private rented accommodation where rental values are often expensive and many cannot keep up with the rent, especially when it is suddenly increased, thus falling into arrears and risking eviction and homelessness because of a failure to build sufficient quantities of social housing.

Homelessness is a problem for society and it has to be addressed by all of us, and needs to be addressed by everyone working with the homeless rather than working for them so as simply to move the problem on (aka: to get them out of sight and out of mind).

While there is an anti-social problem in our churchyard, we are at the end of the day talking about human beings, made in the image of God. Knee-jerk reactions and short-term unrealistic expectations will not serve to solve the problem of homelessness.

The Works of Mercy...

There is currently much emphasis in the western Church by the Pope, the Archbishop of Canterbury and indeed our own Bishop Jonathan on mercy. This in no small part is because at times it becomes apparent that we live in a somewhat individualistic, selfish and even vindictive age - despite great acts of kindness and goodness that we see from time to time.

The Church has traditionally encouraged her children to understand the practice of merciful love by dividing the works of mercy into two kinds: corporal (that is, bodily) and spiritual. What we saw in the life of St Teresa of Calcutta is a shining example of a life dedicated especially to practicing the corporal works of mercy:

- (1) Feed the hungry.
- (2) Give drink to the thirsty.
- (3) Clothe the naked.
- (4) Shelter the homeless.
- (5) Visit those in prison.
- (6) Comfort the sick.
- (7) Bury the dead.

Perhaps our first reaction upon reading this traditional list might be, "This list is a bit out of date. After all, when do we ever have the opportunity in the modern world to 'give drink to the thirsty' or to 'clothe the naked'? And who in their right mind would fail to bury their loved ones these days!"

Perhaps we ought not to be too hasty, however, in dismissing the usefulness of this old list of the corporal works of mercy. It may be more helpful than we think in challenging us to discern new ways that our merciful Saviour is calling us to follow Him.



This week we begin a series of brief articles considering these Corporal Works of Mercy followed by a series on the Spiritual Works of Mercy, which are:

- (1) Admonish sinners.
- (2) Instruct the ignorant.
- (3) Counsel the doubtful.
- (4) Comfort the sorrowful.
- (5) Be patient with those in error.
- (6) Forgive offences.
- (7) Pray for the living and the dead.

Let us pray that we may be a merciful people.

1. Feed the Hungry

The first corporal work of mercy is to "feed the hungry." Jesus included this in his exhortation regarding the final judgement, where He turned away the goats who did not give any food to the "least of these" (Matthew 25:31-46). Feeding the hungry is a basic tenet of being a Christian, but unfortunately the modern prosperity we enjoy has spoiled us and we sometimes believe no one goes hungry in the United Kingdom. However, it does happen and often right in front of us. For example, according to OXFAM:

- Over 2 million people in the UK are estimated to be malnourished, and 3 million are at risk of becoming so.
- 36% of the UK population are just one heating bill or a broken washing machine away from hardship.
- 1 in 6 parents have gone without food themselves to afford to feed their families

Families in the UK do go hungry and this is especially important as we consider our thankfulness for the Harvest and our minds turn towards the Christmas, when we feast on the enormous plenty that we have and when some throw away about half of what they buy. Feeling hunger doesn't phase us, except when we are hungry in-between meals.

So, what should we do? How do we "feed the hungry?"

The best way we can "feed the hungry" is to be active in our local community. Almost every community has a food bank where food is distributed to families in need. Additionally, many communities have "soup kitchens," where they offer weekly or daily meals for those in need. Many communities even have a Lunch on Christmas Day where a meal is offered to anyone who is hungry or who is lonely during the holidays. All of these ways bring us into contact with the real people who are hungry.

This is important, for when we give money to various organisations (while a good and noble thing), we are very much removed from the situation and never get our hands dirty. We never have an encounter with a hungry person and we barely have any compassion. We give our money away so that "someone else" can deal with the poor and hungry.

Unfortunately, people often scoff at the poor and hungry and tell them plainly to "get a job!" We are often tempted to think that there is no reason why they should be hungry, and often think that they are the ones to blame. However, we do not know their situation and do not realise that we should treat them in the same way that we would want to be treated. Who knows, we could be the next statistic and could be in a situation where we are begging for food.

In the end, feeding the hungry is an important work of mercy that we should actively engage in. We should be the ones who literally "feed the hungry" by volunteering in our local community. In a very real sense, it is not an "option" to feed the hungry, but a mandate given to us by Jesus Christ.