

POEM FOR FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

"Angel of wrath! why linger in mid-air,
While the devoted city's cry
Louder and louder swells? and canst thou spare,
Thy full-charged vial standing by?"
Thus, with stern voice, unsparing Justice pleads:
He hears her not--with softened gaze
His eye is following where sweet Mercy leads,
And till she give the sign, his fury stays.

Guided by her, along the mountain road,
Far through the twilight of the morn,
With hurried footsteps from the accursed abode
He sees the holy household borne;
Angels, or more, on either hand are nigh,
To speed them o'er the tempting plain,
Lingering in heart, and with frail sidelong eye
Seeking how near they may unharmed remain.

"Ah! wherefore gleam those upland slopes so fair?
And why, through every woodland arch,
Swells yon bright vale, as Eden rich and rare,
Where Jordan winds his stately march;
If all must be forsaken, ruined all,
If God have planted but to burn? -
Surely not yet the avenging shower will fall,
Though to my home for one last look I turn."

Thus while they waver, surely long ago
They had provoked the withering blast,
But that the merciful Avengers know
Their frailty well, and hold them fast.
"Haste, for thy life escape, nor look behind" -
Ever in thrilling sounds like these
They check the wandering eye, severely kind,
Nor let the sinner lose his soul at ease.

And when, o'erwearied with the steep ascent,
We for a nearer refuge crave,
One little spot of ground in mercy lent,
One hour of home before the grave,
Oft in His pity o'er His children weak,
His hand withdraws the penal fire,
And where we fondly cling, forbears to wreak
Full vengeance, till our hearts are weaned entire.

Thus, by the merits of one righteous man,
The Church, our Zoar, shall abide,
Till she abuse, so sore, her lengthened span,
E'en Mercy's self her face must hide.
Then, onward yet a step, thou hard-won soul;
Though in the Church thou know thy place,
The mountain farther lies--there seek thy goal,
There breathe at large, o'erpast thy dangerous race.

Sweet is the smile of home; the mutual look
When hearts are of each other sure;
Sweet all the joys that crowd the household
nook,
The haunt of all affections pure;
Yet in the world e'en these abide, and we
Above the world our calling boast;
Once gain the mountain-top, and thou art free:
Till then, who rest, presume; who turn to look, are
lost.

John Keble, Priest



The Parish of
**STONY
STRATFORD**
with
CALVERTON

**St Mary & St Giles, Stony Stratford
with All Saints, Calverton**

THE FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

5th March AD 2017

The temptations, to which our Lord allowed himself to be submitted, are for us a source of encouragement and consolation. If our Lord and master under went temptation, we cannot and must not expect to live a Christian life without experiencing similar tests and trials. The three temptations Satan put to our Lord were suggestions to forget his purpose in life - his messianic mission of redemption. He was urged to get all the bodily comforts of life, all the self-glory which men could give him, and all the possessions and power this world has to offer.



Our basic temptations in life are the same: bodily comforts and pleasure, the empty esteem of our fellowman, wealth and power. There are millions of men and women on earth today - many of them nominal Christians - who have given in to these temptations and, are wasting their lives chasing after these unattainable shadows. But even should they manage to catch up with some of them, they soon find out that they are empty baubles. They will have to leave them so very soon.

Today, let each one of us look into his heart and honestly examine his reaction to these temptations. Do we imitate our Saviour and leader, and say "begone Satan"? Our purpose in life is not to collect its treasures, its honours or its pleasures. We are here for a few short years, to merit the unending life which Christ has won for us. Would we be so foolish as to swap our inheritance for a mere mess of pottage (see Gen. 25:29-34)?

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)

Rector: Fr Ross Northing SSC - Tel: 01908 562148

Email: rector@parishstonystratfordcalverton.com - Mobile: 07718 884779

Associate Minister: Fr Tunji Adebiji - Tel: 01525 790954

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

Church Army Officer: Sister Janet Northing CA - Tel: 01908 562148

Email: jf.northing@btinternet.com

Arrangements for Banns, Holy Matrimony & Baptisms:

May be made by contacting Fr Ross on 01908 562148

Confessions: May be made after Masses or by appointment.

Parish Website: www.parishstonystratfordcalverton.com

To Hire the Parish Hall: 'phone Nicola Crompton on 07979 653515

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 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 every £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.

At St Mary & St Giles this week:

Sidesmen Team 1
Serving Team: Team 3
Offertory bearers: Older Young Christians
Church Gardeners: Team 3
Church Cleaners Team 1

Worshipping Numbers Last Sunday: 198

Worshipping Numbers on the weekdays prior: 38

Prayer Thought: Today's Mass reminds us, if we need reminding, that life involves a struggle with temptation. In that testing we sometimes fail God, fail others, fail ourselves. We need to turn to God for mercy and to pray for his constant help.

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 Genesis 2: 7-9; 3: 1-7
Reader at SMSG: Mary Siggers
Reader at All Saints: Jonathan Dunn

(Old Testament Page 2 in the Bibles) is the saddest story ever told. God made us in order to live in his friendship; but, from the first, we have failed our God.

The Responsorial Psalm (from Psalm 51)

R/. Have mercy on us, O Lord, for we have sinned.

Have mercy on me, God, in your kindness. In your compassion blot out my offence. O wash me more and more from my guilt and cleanse me from my sin. ®

My offences truly I know them; my sin is always before me. Against you, you alone, have I sinned; what is evil in your sight I have done. ®

A pure heart create for me, O God, put a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence, nor deprive me of your holy spirit. ®

Give me again the joy of your help; with a spirit of fervour sustain me. O Lord, open my lips and my mouth shall declare your praise. ®

The Second Reading Romans 5:12-19

Reader at SMSG: Dai Evans

are to be avoided at all costs. If that means, literally, running in the opposite direction - run. If that means declining an invitation - decline it. Whatever it means be sure to avoid these "occasions of sin."

The third step is to be a people in the habit of prayer. Prayer is talking with God. When St. Paul says to "pray ceaselessly", this is what he means. Christians are to be people that are in a constant connection with God, just as Jesus was with His Father. When we know God, not just know of Him, we will be prepared to resist Satan's lies. Become familiar with Jesus' words, with the Father's plan for our lives, and with the everyday movements of the Holy Spirit in our hearts.

The fourth, and final, step is to avoid conversations with the devil. It is unlikely that we verbally hear Satan speak to us, but, if we have completed steps 1-3, we will recognize our weaknesses, the things that lead to falling into them, and we will be growing closer to God every day. The devil's whispers will become like foghorn blows. We will begin to recognize them and to gain the strength, knowledge, and grace necessary to resist them. Living the Christian life does not get easier, we just get better at it.

A lesson to be learned from Jesus' answer, "Man does not live by bread alone," is that we ought not to be subject to our appetites, but should act according to God's word. As Christians, we will spend our whole lives dying to ourselves and constantly reorienting ourselves towards our ultimate end and goal - becoming the best version of ourselves. It is through conquering these moments of temptation - through knowledge of God in prayer and not engaging Satan in conversation - that we become better versions of ourselves - better disciples and friends of our Lord Jesus Christ.

THIS WEEK IN OUR PARISH

TODAY: 1st Sunday of Lent

8:30am Morning Prayer at St Mary & St Giles

9:30am PARISH MASS at St Mary & St Giles

11:00am FAMILY MASS at All Saints

Intention: Our Parish

Monday: Feria

9:30am 'Squeals on Wheels' in the Parish Hall

8:00pm Bellringing Practice

Pray for: the Sick, Housebound & Handicapped

Tuesday: St Perpetua & Felicity, Martyrs

10:30am Mass + Elevenses at All Saints

Intention: For all Confessors and Penitents

Wednesday: Feria (Ember Day)

12:30pm Deanery Clergy Chapter

7:30pm SMSG School Full Governors'

Meeting at South Site

7:30pm Mass at St Mary & St Giles

Intention: For the grace to observe a Holy Lent

Thursday: Feria

9:00am Guided Mass for Yr6 - SMSG School

10:30am Mass at St Mary & St Giles

7:00pm Stations of the Cross

Intention: For the Sick

Friday: Feria (Ember Day)

8:00am Mass at SMSG Sch (North Site)

7:30pm Parish Singers Rehearsal

Intention: For the Faithful Departed

Saturday: Feria (Ember Day)

12:00n Lent Lunch in Parish Hall

7:30pm Wolverton Light Orchestra

Concert in St Mary & St Giles

Pray for: Visitors to our Parish Churches

Next Sunday: 2nd Sunday of Lent

8:30am Morning Prayer at St Mary & St Giles

9:30am PARISH MASS at St Mary & St Giles

11:00am FAMILY MASS at All Saints

Intention: Our Parish

Readings next Sunday: 2nd Sunday of Lent

1st Reading: Genesis 12: 1-4a

Psalm: 33 (part)

2nd Reading: 2 Timothy 1: 8b-10

Gospel: Matthew 17: 1-9



rie. If you would like a ticket, please see Eilish Friedman or Dai Evans as soon as possible.

STONY STRATFORD & WOLVERTON CHURCHES NOTICE: Could you offer accommodation to a young EU man from Moldova for a minimum of one month from Thursday 16th March please? Aged 22, he's been in England for 11 months. He's held temporary jobs in Ely and Bognor Regis and been on the Winter Night Shelter scheme in Milton Keynes during the last 3 months. He's never been "on the streets" and it's important we prevent that after the WNS ends 16th March. He has just started working at Kiln Farm but not been able to save up the money required for a private rental deposit. He is well mannered, clean, well educated, healthy and has a pleasant disposition. No mental health or substance abuse issues. He could pay up to £75 per week including utilities; more if meals were provided. If you can help, or wish to discuss further, please contact Hazel Reynolds ('move on' WNS volunteer) on 01908 614124 or email hazel_reynolds@hotmail.co.uk

Thank you.

Resisting Temptation:

In the Christian life, Jesus is always the example. Jesus, His life, His works, and His commands are the foundation of Christianity. If every Christian could learn how to resist temptation in the moment, the Christian landscape could be very different. So look to Jesus to show you how to overcome Satan's lies. *"For forty days and forty nights [Jesus] fasted and became very hungry. During that time the devil came and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become loaves of bread.'" (Matthew 4:2-3 NLT).* Jesus has fasted for forty days and is very hungry. Satan knows this. The devil did not follow Jesus into the desert and tempt Him on day one. He tempted Jesus on day forty.

The devil sees human weaknesses and he will prey upon them. Even when our individual weakness is hidden or ignored, Satan sees it. Yet, in the midst of this knowledge, always remember that Jesus has already conquered sin. Satan has already been defeated in the fullness of time. It is now, in these small individual moments of temptation, that we must unite ourselves to God and continue to choose Him over ourselves. The devil calls Jesus' authority into question, just as he tried to challenge God's words to Adam and Eve in the very beginning. The devil challenges Jesus to prove His divinity by using His power to change rocks into bread. But, unlike Eve, Jesus does not debate with Satan. She entered into a conversation with the devil. Jesus does not even acknowledge that Satan has questioned that He is the Son of God. Jesus could have very easily changed the rocks - He created the rocks! But He never uses His power for His own gain. Even clothed in human nature, Jesus remains so interconnected with His Father that He doesn't even hesitate. He says, *"...No! The Scriptures say, People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God"* (Matthew 4:4 NLT)

Notice that Jesus does not engage Satan. All He does is quote Scripture, the Word of God. He relies on the Father's Will to guide Him in this very difficult moment. He just says, "no." No conversation. Jesus knows His Father's Will because He spends so much time in prayer. Consequently, the devil has no ground to gain traction.

The first step to resist temptation in the moment is to recognise our weaknesses. If we do not know what challenges we are working on overcoming, they will never be overcome. The second step is to assess our "near occasions of sin." These "near occasions" are things, people, emotions, or series of events that ultimately lead to the moment of temptation. These "occasions"

(New Testament Page 129 in the Bibles) comforts us: Christ our Lord has rescued us from the power of sin. We were helpless, but he has helped us and saved us.

Gospel Acclamation

Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory! Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. **Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory!**

The Gospel *Matthew 4: 1-11*

(New Testament Page 3 in the Bibles) tells us that our Lord himself was tested, was tempted. This means that he understands our trials and can help us all the more.

The Prayer of the Faithful

(Intercessor at SMSG: Fr Tunji)

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 . . . Fiddy Abraham, Polly Barclay, Gerry Bonner, Shirley Brown, Steve Cooper, Tony Finnegan, Larry Francis, Russell Herbert, Jane Holman, Terry Mason, Sue Maton, Pete, Ron Smart, Rory, Tony Oakley, Wendy.* 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... Henry Blake, Muriel Francis, Eileen Haseldine, Cyril Millward, Betty Spicer... and for those whose anniversaries of death occur during this week..5th Mary Fitch; 6th Frank Todd, Annie Martin, Wendy Trebble; 7th Edna Shillingford, Celia Meakins, Vera Timmins; 8th Rodger Webb; 9th Sarah Godfrey; 10th Sarah Bull; 11th Audrey Bayard, Malcolm Swann.* 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:

Father, I abandon myself into your hands; do with me what you will. Whatever you may do, I thank you: I am ready for all, I accept all. Let only your will be done in me, and in all Your creatures - I wish no more than this, O Lord. Into your hands I commend my soul; I offer it to you with all the love of my heart, for I love you Lord, and so need to give myself, to surrender myself into your hands, without reserve, and with boundless confidence, For you are my Father.

(Prayer of abandonment - Charles de Foucauld).

PARISH NEWS & NOTICES

Donations: Following the step of faith taken by the PCC last year in deciding to go ahead with the installation of a new heating system at All Saints, an appeal was launched by the Rector for donations for All Saints Fabric Fund. I am delighted to announce that following a lot of hard work with the Small Lottery before Christmas, with a number of generous donations, and the promise of a large donation to be transferred to the PCC accounts this weekend, the amount in the Fabric Fund is £14,000. Thank you to all those who have been so generous with their time and their gifts.

Lent & Eastertide Mass Cards at St Mary & St Giles: Thanks to a kind and generous donation to the Mission Fund from today we have Mass Cards that reflect the encouragement of the Church to use the Apostles' Creed in these seasons, along with using the Penitential Rite we had previously used.

The Mission Fund has been blessed with a number of such donations since it was set up two years ago and is still open to further donations to enable those projects that further the mission of Christ the Redeemer, that promote our Parish, and those that link with the Parish Website and Publications.

Stations of the Cross: as from this Thursday will be observed throughout Lent starting at 7:00pm in St Mary & St Giles.

Lent Boxes: Our Lenten Appeal this year will be for the Additional Curates Society and Lent Boxes have been ordered and are available in both our churches as from today.

Lent Lunches: will be served on the Saturdays of Lent. Thank you to all those who have volunteered to host these. The lunch held at All Saints on Ash Wednesday raised over £80 for our Lent Appeal and was well attended with tables and

chairs being set up down the aisle in the Nave.

A Journey to the Cross: On Wednesday evenings during Lent the Mass will begin in the Parish Hall with a DVD presentation of one of a series of images of Christ's journey to the Cross. Each one includes reflective words, scripture references, a short prayer and concludes with one verse of a hymn. Mass will then follow in church. The same pattern will be followed with the evening Masses on the first three days of Holy Week.

2018 - Parish Celebration: Bishop Jonathan wants us to mark the important part our Parish played in the Oxford Movement with a major celebration for both Parish Churches. It seems fitting to do this next year when it will be 160 years since Rector Perceval died and when we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Re-Consecration of the now St Mary & St Giles Church.

As part of these celebrations it would be good to produce an historical record of the Parish. There have been small publications in the past, but these are now out of print. To that end, the Rector would be pleased to receive copies of historical documents, or the loan of former publications, and pointers as to what records are available online and still in print. *Thank you.*

Kieran asks for help! Following on from Kieran's talk last Sunday, he would like as many local residents as possible to respond to the Local Authority consultation on expanding St Mary and St Giles School from 2-form to 3-form entry. The consultation is at <https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/consultations/396> and the closing date is the 11th March so please complete the short online form today. Thank you.

Annual Meetings: As usual it is that time

of year again for all the things connected with the round of these meetings.

The *Vestry Meetings* for the election of Churchwardens will take place on Sunday 26th March at the end of each of our Parish Churches Principal Acts of Worship. Nominations for the Office of Churchwarden require the approval of the Rector and must be received 24 hours prior to the Vestry Meeting. We are permitted to elect two Churchwardens for each of our Parish Churches.

The *Annual Parochial Church Meeting* takes place at 12:00noon on Sunday 2nd April at All Saints Church (this meeting alternates between our two Parish Churches on a bi-annual basis). The Agenda for this year's meeting, along with the Minutes of last year's meeting and the 2015 Annual Report and Accounts will be available following the March Parochial Church Council Meeting - as the PCC has to 'receive' the accounts before the Annual Report and Accounts can be published.

The revision of the Electoral Roll for the Parish is now open and forms for inclusion on the Roll are available in both churches. Please note that we are not required to renew the Roll until 2019, so if you are already a member of the Roll you do not need to fill in a form. If you have joined the parish in the last twelve months and are over the age of 16 then please do fill in a form and return them either to the Rector or to Deb Kidd.

Nomination Forms for election to the Deanery Synod and/or Parochial Church Council are available from the Rector.

Parish Weekend Pilgrimage to The Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham 2017:

Thank you to all those who have booked places so far. Please could all completed booking forms along with deposits of £30 per person be given to Fr Ross as soon as possible, so that we can give the

Shrine an early indication of numbers and secure rooms. If you have not been to Walsingham before this is an ideal introduction to the wonderful ministry of the Shrine. Fr Ross or any previous pilgrims will be only too pleased to tell you more.

DVD Presentation on Walsingham: a number have people have asked if more could be explained about Walsingham and the Pilgrimages that take place there. It is said that 'a picture paints a thousand words,' so perhaps a DVD presentation may paint millions! Fr Ross will be showing a DVD produced by the Shrine in the Parish Hall This will be of interest to those who have been on Pilgrimage and to those who might be considering doing so, but really would like to know more about what happens on a weekend Pilgrimage. So make a date in your diary for the 15th March after the 7:30pm Mass. See Fr Ross for more details.

Sainsbury's Active Kids Vouchers: It's that time of year again when our Church School is collecting Sainsbury's Active Kids Vouchers 2017. If you, family members or friends shop in Sainsbury's and receive any vouchers, then please pass them to Kieran or Fr Ross We are collecting vouchers until 2nd May. Once all the vouchers are in and collated they will be used to get equipment for P.E. Thank you.

Invitation to the Calcutta Brasserie: on Tuesday, 28th March at 7pm. The Music for All group is organising a meal at the Calcutta Brasserie as a fundraiser, but mainly as a fun occasion for all who would like to enjoy an evening in good company with good food you haven't had to cook yourself! The price is £18 per person, the normal price for a 'Banquet meal' at the Calcutta Brasse-