

REFLECTION - 2nd SUNDAY OF EASTER

"Trust and Mercy"

Everyone wants to be happy. It is our purpose in life. Our Blessed Lord Jesus Christ knew this and left us steps to happiness. They are called the eight beatitudes. One of the steps to happiness is to be merciful. Thus, Our Blessed Lord said, "Blessed are the merciful." St. Thomas Aquinas says that the merciful is one who has a sorrowful heart; being affected with sorrow at the misery of another as though it were his own. Since he is affected with sorrow of the other, he would want to dispel the misery of the other, which is the effect of mercy.

Thus, when someone asks for forgiveness, we see the sorrow of the other and would forgive them. However, one cannot be merciful if he is not meek. How can one see the sorrow of another if he has pride? The only way I can see another's sorrow is if I see myself as not being greater than them. Therefore one must be meek before one can be merciful. To be meek is just seeing one's self as he truly is. He would see himself who has dignity, a person who is in the image of God. He must also see the other as none greater than him. He must see that the person is in the image of God. In this way, they are equal. Both deserve mercy and love.

And this is exactly how God saw man. God made man in the image of Himself. There is something in man that is so valuable that God would become man, die, and resurrect so that he can attain eternal life. In exchange for our humanity, God gives His divinity, that we may be partakers of the Divine Nature. This is what the Fathers meant when they said, "God became man that man might become God." Even though man has sinned against God, God never forgot what He made, that is, good. He made man good. He never forgot this fact. He always remembers that even though man sinned against Him.

If God the Almighty, Who is infinitely greater than man, has mercy toward those who offend Him, should we not also have mercy to those who offend us? Whenever we feel greater than the other, we must always remember the Incarnation when God humbled Himself. We must also remember the agony of Jesus in the garden. Because of His agony, He was unrecognisable. This is why He had to tell the people, "It is I you are looking for." We have to ask ourselves this question, "Would we have recognised Jesus' face?" Will we always recognise Jesus' face? Will we recognise Jesus' face especially in others' faces? Will we see Him in our friends, neighbours, and even our enemies? Will we see Jesus' face when someone asks for our forgiveness?

Love, like the Body of Christ, is indivisible; we cannot love the God we cannot see if we do not love the brother or sister we do see. In refusing to forgive our brothers and sisters, our hearts are closed and their hardness makes them impervious to the Father's merciful love. We must therefore love and be merciful to others if we truly love God. If we have trouble forgiving someone, we must try to see Jesus in them. We have to pray:

Lord Jesus, please show me yourself in others so that I can love you through them.



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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 Lesley Salter on 01908 567404



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

THE SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

Divine Mercy Sunday

23rd April AD 2017

Some quotes on the divine mercy of God:

"Our sins are nothing but a grain of sand alongside the great mountain of the mercy of God." -- *St. John Vianney*

"Where is the foolish person who would think it in his power to commit a sin more than God could forgive." -- *St. Francis de Sales*

"Let your prayers go out to those on the left cross that they may be mindful of the expiatory value of their suffering; let your love also go out to the Good Shepherd on the central Cross who suffers so innocently for all the people, and because you never once thought of yourself but of others, or in other words, because you were merciful, you will hear the reward of mercy from the central Cross: 'This day you shall be with me in paradise.' In that way you become another Good Thief, for a good thief is one who steals Paradise!" -- *Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen*

"Since God displayed His great mercy in so many ways even toward Judas, an apostle turned traitor, since He invited him so often to be forgiven and did not allow him to perish except through despair alone, surely there is no cause for anyone in this life to despair even if an imitator of Judas." -- *St. Thomas More*

"Our only hope, our only confidence, our only assured promise, Lord, is Your mercy." -- *St. Augustine*



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)

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 4
Serving Team:	Team 1
Offertory bearers:	May Jacques
Church Gardeners:	Team 4
Church Cleaners	Team 4

Worshipping Numbers from the School Passion-tide Services through to Easter Day: 1321

Prayer Thought: The Mass is studded with calls to give praise and thanks: 'Let us give thanks... it is right to give him thanks and praise. The word 'alleluia' is a call to praise the Lord; the consecration is introduced by recalling the thanks (and praise) given by Jesus. The Mass is the celebration of God's love for us, and the most natural result of the Christian's appreciation of God's love is to give thanks and praise, and to carry this attitude into our daily lives.

The Collect

Almighty Father, you have given your only Son to die for our sins and to rise again for our justification; grant us so to put away the leaven of malice and wickedness that we may always serve you in pureness of living and truth; through the merits of your Son Jesus Christ 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

Acts of the Apostles 2:42-47

Reader at SMSG: Dai Evans
Reader at All Saints: Rita Shelley

(New Testament Page 101 in the Bibles) describes the ideal Christian community. The earliest Christians were faithful to the teaching of the apostles, they celebrated the Eucharist and prayed in common.

The Responsorial Psalm (from Psalm 118)

R/. Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, for his love has no end.

Let the sons of Israel say:
'His love has no end.'
Let the sons of Aaron say:
'His love has no end.'
Let those who fear the Lord say:
'His love has no end.' ®

I was thrust, thrust down and falling
but the Lord was my helper.
The Lord is my strength and my song;
he was my saviour.
There are shouts of joy and victory

only they did not seem particularly despairing. They seemed quite unnaturally joyful about it, and gave the reason that the death of God had allowed them to eat him and drink his blood.

According to other accounts God was not exactly dead after all; there trailed through the bewildered imagination some sort of fantastic procession of the funeral of God, at which the sun turned black, but which ended with the dead omnipotence breaking out of the tomb and rising again like the sun.
pp. 295-6

And this, from the same book, a piece on Easter Sunday as the first day of the new creation:

They took the body down from the cross and one of the few rich men among the first Christians obtained permission to bury it in a rock tomb in his garden; the Romans setting a military guard lest there should be some riot and attempt to recover the body. There was once more a natural symbolism in these natural proceedings; it was well that the tomb should be sealed with all the secrecy of ancient eastern sepulchre and guarded by the authority of the Caesars.

For in that second cavern the whole of that great and glorious humanity which we call antiquity was gathered up and covered over; and in that place it was buried. It was the end of a very great thing called human history; the history that was merely human. The mythologies and the philosophies were buried there, the gods and the heroes and the sages. In the great Roman phrase, they had lived. But as they could only live, so they could only die; and they were dead.

On the third day the friends of Christ coming at daybreak to the place found the grave empty and the stone rolled away. In varying ways they realised the new wonder; but even they hardly realised that the world had died in the night. What they were looking at was the first day of a new creation, with a new heaven and a new earth; and in a semblance of the gardener God walked again in the garden, in the cool not of the evening but the dawn.
p.345

THIS WEEK IN OUR PARISH

TODAY: THE 2nd SUNDAY OF EASTER

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: ST GEORGE, MARTYR (Transferred) PATRON OF ENGLAND

8:30am Mass at St Mary & St Giles
9:30am 'Squeals on Wheels' in the Parish Hall
8:00pm Bellringing Practice
Pray for: the Sick, Housebound & Handicapped

Tuesday: St Mark, Evangelist

10:30am Mass + Elevesnes at All Saints
12:00n Deanery Clergy Meeting
5:30pm Delegated Decision on School (North Site) Expansion
Intention: St Marks, Milton Keynes

Wednesday: Feria

9:30am Calverton Apprenticing Charity
6:00pm Rector in Parish Office for the arrangement of the Occasional Offices & Parish Business
7:30pm Mass at St Mary & St Giles
Intention: Local Charities

Thursday: Feria

9:45am Whalleys Charity Meeting
10:30am Mass at St Mary & St Giles
2:00pm Arnolds Charity Meeting
6:30pm SMSG Charity Meeting
Intention: all those who serve us in Public Office

Friday: Feria

8:00am Mass at St Mary & St Giles (Sch)
7:30pm Parish Singers Rehearsal
Intention: The Faithful Departed

Saturday: St Catherine of Sienna

9:30am Visiting Bellringers Peal.
Pray for: Visitors to our Parish Churches

Next Sunday: THE 3rd SUNDAY OF EASTER

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: 3rd Sunday of Easter

1st Reading:	Acts 2: 14, 22-33
Psalm:	16 (part)
2nd Reading:	1 Peter 1: 17-21
Gospel:	Luke 24: 13-35

The attention that these words evoke seems yet more paradoxical if we remember that the Lord had proposed, to the same author of the Gospel, what can be justly referred to as the Christian method, 'come and see' (Jn 1:39). How can we possibly reconcile these two phrases by Jesus that form the ideal setting for the whole of the fourth Gospel? Perhaps, in the end, the Lord decided to change His method? What do the words 'have not seen' really mean?

The timely recollection of the 'eight days after,' which is the Sunday after the Resurrection, permits us to tie our reflection to one of the most significant Eucharistic hymns composed by another Thomas, St Thomas Aquinas. In the Adore Te Devote, which refers to the Eucharist, we read: 'Sight, touch, taste are all deceived in their judgement of you. But hearing suffices firmly to believe'. Combining these words with today's Gospel we can justly affirm that the experience 'to see' was not denied to us, but it is in contrast with the Apostle Thomas' physical experience, who was able to put his own finger into the holes in Christ's hands and side, whilst we can only comprehend it in the faith which is guarded and transmitted by the Church, our Mother and Teacher.

That which we 'have not seen' is therefore the glorious Body of the Risen One. However, today we have the ability to 'listen' to the Word of God and the Magisterium of the Church and so we can 'see' the real Body of Christ which is the Eucharist. We can 'see' His Mystical Body which is the Church. We can 'see' Him in our lives and in the lives of our many brothers who, after meeting the Lord in a real but mysterious way, are united to Him in His Spirit!

Like Thomas, Christ calls us to fill the holes left by the instruments of the passion in His Body with our own hands so that our lives and the verbal witness that we give proclaim His Resurrection. Our senses could betray us, but

we know that we have met the Risen One and we have recognised Him!

The certain hope that Peter, who betrayed the Lord three times for fear of death, proclaims to us with the words, 'rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy' (1 Peter 1:8), become fully comprehensible because blessed are they that 'have not seen' the Risen Lord, but seeing the joy of His disciples 'have believed' in Him!



GK Chesterton on the Resurrection: Chesterton (1874-1936), philosopher, commentator and Christian apologist suggests in 'The Everlasting Man' (1925) how news of the Lord's resurrection might have been construed as it filtered through to Rome:

The members of some Eastern sect or secret society or other seemed to have made a scene somewhere; nobody could imagine why. One incident occurred once or twice again and began to arouse irritation out of proportion to its insignificance. It was not exactly what these provincials said; though of course it sounded queer enough.

They seemed to be saying that God was dead and that they themselves had seen him die. This might be one of the many manias produced by the despair of the age;

in the tents of the just. ®

The stone which the builders rejected has become the corner stone. This is the work of the Lord, a marvel in our eyes. This day was made by the Lord; we rejoice and are glad. ®

The Second Reading 1 Peter 1:3-9

Reader at SMSG: Matthew Lucas

(New Testament Page 196 in the Bibles) Peter reminds us that Christ's resurrection is a guarantee that we are destined for eternal life with Christ. This assurance of salvation enables us to bear the trials of life with joy.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia! You believed, Thomas, because you have seen me says the Lord; blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe. **Alleluia!**

The Gospel John 20:19-31

(New Testament Page 98 in the Bibles) describes how the risen Jesus gave to the disciples the task of continuing his own work. He gave them the Spirit who would enable them to carry out their mission. The identity of him who appeared was put beyond all doubt when Thomas touched the Saviour's sacred wounds.

The Prayer of the Faithful

(Intercessor at SMSG: Fr Tunji)

Priest: My brothers and sisters let us pray in the Spirit of the Lord Jesus who is risen from the dead.

Intercessor: For the community of believers in Jesus' resurrection, that it will remain strong in love and faithful to the gospel of salvation.....

V/. Let us pray to the Lord....

R/. **God of love, hear us.**

For newly baptised adults, that they will continue to draw on the life of the risen Christ who abides among us in word and sacrament.....

For those who doubt the good news of salvation, that the Spirit will guide them into the truth of faith.....

For those who continue to suffer for the faith, especially in areas hostile to Christianity, that they will be guarded with God's saving power.....

For those who are sick and confined by fear... *Fiddy Abraham, Polly Barclay, Gerry Bonner, Doreen Brooks, Shirley Brown, Steve Cooper, Terry Crook, Larry Francis, Russell Herbert, Jane Holman, Terry Mason, Sue Maton, Rosalie Osbourne, Pete, Ron Smart, Tony Oakley, Wendy...*, that God's freeing love will lead them to the peace of the risen Christ.....

For those who have believed in Christ's resurrection and have died, that they will be counted among the blessed in the reign of glory, particularly... *Rory, Tony Finnegan, Bob Gray, Cecil Tee...* and for those whose anniversaries of death occur during this week...**23rd** *Frances Greenall, Mary Williamson, Kathleen Russell;* **25th** *George Henson, Avril Hopcraft;* **26th** *Joseph Wallis, George Goodger, Anne Ryan;* **27th** *Roy Quick, Mabel Poppleton, Barry Pickthall, Laura Roberts;* **28th** *Edith Taylor, Kenneth Lucas;* **29th** *Keziah Neal, Aldred Varney...*

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

Priest: O God, in your abounding mercy, sustain in your Church the gifts of faith, hope, and love which give us new life in Christ, who lives and reigns forever and ever. **Amen.**

Communion Reflection:

Lord Jesus, we have eaten of your Body and Blood which you have given as a pledge to us. What greater sign could we ask for? How could your presence be more near? Yet, even so, I find myself so lacking in trust. My faith could be adorned with confidence and joy, if only it were more firmly based in you. This week, Lord Jesus, be within my heart, mind and soul; in all places where I am, in all things that I do.

PARISH NEWS & NOTICES

THIS AFTERNOON - Tea Dance in SMSG School Hall: Sunday, 23rd April 3-5pm. Popular sequence and ballroom dancing accompanied by SMSG Church Band with an interval tea. £5 each in advance from Lesley Salter or any Band member.

Worshipping Numbers during Holy Week and Easter: It is good to be able to report that there was an increase in attendance this year at All Services in our Parishes Churches over this most Holy Season of the Church's Year.

Easter Greetings: Best Wishes to you and the congregation in your Churches family on this Easter time. It is so nice to celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord as Christians all together. *From the Greek Orthodox "family" of the area,*

Lenten Appeal: Please do return your Lent Boxes by the end of April, so as to enable the funds to be sent to the Additional Curates Society.

Thank you to everyone who helped organise and run, or who participated in our Lenten Lunches this year. They were all very well attended and helped to raise almost £600 towards the total of our appeal for the Additional Curates Society. Once the Lent Boxes have all been returned and counted we shall be able to announce the final total. *Thank you.*

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.

N.B. All bookings to be made before May 15th.

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 to

pleased to tell you more.

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.

St Mary & St Giles School (North Site) - Mid-day Supervisor: Do you enjoy spending time with children? A permanent post is available for a Mid-day Supervisor starting 18th April 2017. We are ideally looking for a person experienced with looking after children and able to provide the highest standards of care and support for all our pupils.

Monday to Friday Term-time only 12:00pm to 1:30pm, Grade A Level 1, FTE Salary £16491, Actual salary £2777.07 (includes 5.2 weeks paid holiday). We are committed to safeguarding the welfare of all our children. All applicants will be subject to a DBS (previously CRB) Check.

If you are interested in this post, please contact the school office (01908 562186) for an application form.

Thank you: to everyone who supported our young people in their act of mercy. They were fundraising for a replacement marquee for a parish in the Coventry diocese after theirs blew away in a storm last year. A total of £320 has been raised and will be forwarded to the parish. Every good wish. Deb

Seats in Church: The practice of Pew Letting has, mercifully, disappeared from all but one Parish Church in the Church of England. My predecessor, I am given to understand, made it very clear, that

was not something that he would countenance, and nor do I.

I was therefore, somewhat horrified to be told before Easter that someone had asked a person to move as "that seat is mine." That attitude is one sure way to discourage people from joining us for worship, and as I made very clear recently, I am not running a social club and especially not running a private members club.

All the seats in the nave and the gallery are available to anyone to sit in. While some may prefer to sit in a particular seat—I wish to make it very clear that no one is to be asked to move. If you arrive and someone is sitting in a seat you may usually sit in then there are plenty of other seats available.

Chalice Etiquette: I must remind everyone once more that the Chalice Assistants have been trained to administer the Precious Blood, and that no one should attempt to take the Chalice out of their hands, nor attempt to grab hold of it, as this could lead to the Precious Blood being spilt.

Similarly, the Chalice assistants have been trained to wipe the exterior and the top edge of the rim of the Chalice. They do not wipe the interior for two reasons: firstly because this can lead to the purificator (the small, folded linen cloth used to wipe the Chalice) becoming soaked in the Precious Blood, and secondly, because it is not necessary as when alcohol and silver meet germs cannot survive.

I also ask that everyone refrains from making requests of Chalice Assistants at the Altar Rails, as this disturbs the moment of Communion for the Communicants either side of you.

Christian Aid Week: is held this year from the 14th to the 20th May.

"Everything was a threat. They were putting bombs in the trees and on the roads" Nejebar fled Afghanistan with her family.

This year's Christian Aid Week focuses on providing help to the thousands of families trapped in European refugee camps by providing family kitchen equipment to restore some normality to shattered lives.

If you would like to be a house to house collector please sign up at the back of the Church.

You can raise funds in other ways too, such as hosting a coffee morning or a Christian Aid Big Brekkie for friends and neighbours. Please contact me for further information.

Richard Hearne Tel: MK 560895

Email: richardhearne@hotmail.co.uk.

A Reflection for the Second Sunday of Easter (or Divine Mercy Sunday):

The Holy Gospel that the Liturgy presents to us on this second Sunday of Easter, is one of the most well known, discussed, and appreciated—the meeting of the Risen Lord with St Thomas. The Fathers of the Church have given us numerous insights into this Gospel text. Likewise, it is has proven the inspiration to the numerous artists who have physically represented the events of this Gospel in order to give us a clear idea of what happened, 'eight days after' the first apparition of the Risen One, to the disciples congregated in the cenacle.

Jesus' response to Thomas, after he recognised Him as 'My Lord and my God', has a mysterious fascination that must relate not so much to the disciples—those who 'have seen'—but rather to those, like us, who were added to their number afterwards. 'You have come to believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.' (John 20:29)