

sia, by referring to one's religious principles, then one is breaking the law. If you are a Protestant pastor and live in a country in which same sex unions are legal, then you have little chance of refusing this couple the right to a church wedding while remaining unpunished by the state. Thus, for example, the Swedish prime minister Stefan Löfven recently stated that all pastors of the Church of Sweden ought to be obliged to perform church weddings for same-sex couples, adding that "I see parallels to the midwife who refuses to perform abortions. If you work as a midwife you must be able to perform abortions, otherwise you have to do something else... It is the same for priests."



Such political figures are the complete opposite to those who were at the foundations of the European Union, and this type of rhetoric, in my view, is suicidal for the continent of Europe. The legalization of abortion, the encouragement of sexual promiscuity, and the systematic attempts to undermine family values have led to a profound demographic crisis in many European countries. This crisis, accompanied by an identity crisis, will lead to a situation whereby in time other peoples will inhabit Europe with a different religion, a different culture and different paradigms of values.

Often the language of hatred in relation to Christians is used when Christians insist on their right to participate in public affairs. They enjoy the same right as much as it is enjoyed by adherents of any other religion or by atheists. However, in practice it is not like this: dozens of instances of discrimination against Christians on the grounds of their beliefs are registered every year. These instances are highlighted by the media and become a topic for public discussion, but the situation as a whole does not change as a result.

In modern-day Europe militant secularism has been transformed into an autonomous power that does not tolerate dissent. It allows well-organized minority groups to successfully impose their will on the majority under the pretext of observing human rights. Today human rights have in essence been transformed into an instrument for manipulating the majority, and the struggle for human rights into the dictatorship of the minority in relation to the majority.

Unfortunately, we should note that these are not isolated incidents, but an already formed system of values supported by the state and supra-national institutions of the EU.

In a situation where we have aggressive pressure of the groups which propagate ideas unacceptable from the perspective of traditional Christian morality, it is essential to unite the Churches' efforts in opposing these processes, to act jointly in the media, in the sphere of legal support, as well as in propagating common Christian values at all possible levels. It is important that the Churches share their experience in this sphere, and develop cooperation between church human rights organizations and monitoring centres.

I believe it important that Christians of Europe should stand shoulder to shoulder to defend those values upon which the life of the continent has been built for centuries, and that they should view the afflictions and dismay of Christians throughout the world as their own."



The Parish of
STONY STRATFORD
 with
CALVERTON

**St Mary & St Giles, Stony Stratford
 with All Saints, Calverton**
THE TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
 8th October AD 2017

PARABLES OF JESUS



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 Adebisi - 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

Director of Music: Mr Jonathan Kingston - Email: jonkingston@hotmail.co.uk

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



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 3
Serving Team:	Team 2
Offertory bearers:	David & Jenny Williams
Church Gardeners:	Team 4
Church Cleaners	Team 2

Worshipping Numbers last Sunday: 132

Weekday Worshipping Numbers W/E 30/9 - 91

Prayer Thought:

God has always sent messengers to remind us of all the gifts he gives us and how we should use those gifts. We are here to remember the Son and to renew our sharing in his life.

The Collect

Almighty God, you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in you: pour your love into our hearts and draw us to yourself, and so bring us at last to your heavenly city where we shall see you face to face; 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

Isaiah 5:1-7

Reader at SMSG: Lydia Jones

Reader at All Saints: Sister Janet

(Old Testament Page 584 in the Bibles) is an Old Testament parable which refers to Israel as a vineyard planted by God. Jesus, too, speaks of Israel as a vineyard.

The Responsorial Psalm (from Psalm 80)

R/. The vineyard of the Lord is the House of Israel.

You brought a vine out of Egypt; to plant it you drove out the nations. It stretched out its branches to the sea, to the Great River it stretched out its shoots. ®

Then why have you broken down its walls? It is plucked by all who pass by. It is ravaged by the boar of the forest, devoured by the beasts of the field. ®

God of hosts, turn again, we implore, look down from heaven and see. Visit this vine and protect it, the vine your right hand has planted. ®

And we shall never forsake you again: give us life that we may call upon your name. God of hosts, bring us back; let your face shine on us and we shall be saved. ®

resented Roman legal concepts and social order; and Golgotha, i.e. Christianity. It must be noted too that the founding fathers of the European Union were deeply religious men – for example, the French foreign minister Robert Schuman, the chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany Konrad Adenauer and the Italian foreign minister Alcide De Gasperi.

And when half a century after the creation of the European Union its constitution was being written, it would have been natural for the Christian Churches to expect that the role of Christianity as one of the European values to have been included in this document, without encroaching upon the secular nature of the authorities in a unified Europe. But, as we know, this did not happen. The European Union, when writing its constitution, declined to mention its Christian heritage even in the preamble of the document.

I firmly believe that a Europe which has renounced Christ will not be able to preserve its cultural and spiritual identity. For many centuries Europe was the home where various religious traditions lived side by side, but at the same time in which Christianity played a dominant role. This role is reflected, particularly, in the architecture of European cities which are hard to imagine without their magnificent cathedrals and numerous, though more modest in size, churches.

A monopoly of the secular idea has taken hold in Europe. Its manifestation is the expulsion of the religious worldview from the public expanse. Article 4 of the UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination based on Religion and Belief, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1981, affirms that "All States shall take effective measures to prevent and eliminate discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief in the recognition, exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms in all fields of civil, economic, political, social and cultural life."

The architects of the secular society have seen to the legal aspect of the issue: formally one can confess any religion, but if one attempts to motivate one's actions through religious belief and freedom of conscience and encourage others to act in accordance with their faith, then at best one will be subjected to censure, or at worst to criminal prosecution.

For example, if one is a doctor and refuses to perform an abortion, or euthana-

THIS WEEK IN OUR PARISH

TODAY: 27th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

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: Ss Denys & Companions, Martyrs

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

8:00pm Bellringing Practice

Pray for: the Sick, Housebound & Handicapped

Tuesday: St Paulinus, Bishop

St Mary & St Giles School Open Day

10:30am Mass at All Saints + 'Elevenses'

Pray for: the Archbishop of York

Wednesday: St Ethelburga, Abbess

6:30pm Handbell Ringing at SMSG School

7:15pm The Band Practice at SMSG School

7:30pm Mass for Healing at SMSG

Pray for: all Religious Orders

Thursday: St Wilfrid, Bishop

9:45am Whalleys Charity Meeting

10:30am Mass at St Mary & St Giles

2:00pm Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible

7:00pm Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible
Both sessions at the Rectory

Pray for: the Conversion of England

Friday: St Edward the Confessor

8:00am Mass at St Mary & St Giles Sch

7:30pm Choir Rehearsal

Pray for: Her Majesty the Queen

Saturday: St Callistus 1, Pope & Martyr

8:00am Mass at St Mary & St Giles

Pray for: Visitors to our Parish Churches

Next Sunday: 28th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

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

3:00pm Autumn Concert

Intention: Our Parish

Readings next Sunday:

28th Sunday in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Isaiah 25: 6-10a

Psalm: 23 (part)

2nd Reading: Philippians 4: 12-14, 19-20

Gospel: Matthew 22: 1-14

sia by the Levada-Centre showed a sharp decline in the number of atheists and non-believers from 26 percent in December 2015 to 13 percent in July 2017. This, of course, does not mean that all the remaining 83 percent are practicing believers. Many defined themselves as "religious to some degree" or "not too religious", but nevertheless affiliated themselves with one of the traditional religions. However, the number of people who define themselves as being "very religious" is growing steadily.

The contemporary state of religious life in Russian society is directly linked to the tragic events of one hundred years ago. The historical catastrophe of 1917 embroiled Russia in a fratricidal civil war, terror, exile of the nation's best representatives beyond the confines of their homeland, and the deliberate annihilation of whole layers of society – the nobility, the Cossacks, the clergy and affluent peasants. They were declared to be "enemies of the people," and their relatives were subjected to discrimination and became the "disenfranchised," which forced them to the edge of survival. All of this terror took place under the banner of a communist ideology that fought ferociously against religion. Millions of believers were subjected to the cruelest of persecution, harassment, discrimination and repression – from mockery and dismissal in the workplace to imprisonment and execution by firing squad. The Church in those years produced a great multitude of martyrs and confessors for the faith who, as St. Paul said, "were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection; and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment" (Heb 11.35-36).

Discussion on the future of Christianity in Europe is impossible without understanding the prospects for the survival of religiosity among its inhabitants. Research carried out by the Centre for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Cornwell Theological College, USA, indicates that the number of Christians in Europe will be consistently falling: from 560 million people in 2015 to 501 million by 2050. The calculations of the Pew Research Center are more pessimistic and foretell a reduction in Christians in Europe from 553 million people in 2015 to 454 million people by 2050.

These are alarming prognoses, but they reflect the current trends in the transfor-

mation of the religious picture of Europe, and they cannot be ignored. Some are suggesting that, unless special force is applied, Europe cannot simply cease to be Christian on the grounds that Europe has for many centuries been Christian. I would like to remind you all that in Russia before 1917 nobody ever proposed that the collapse of a centuries-old Christian empire would happen and that it would be replaced by an atheistic totalitarian regime. And even when that did happen, few believed that it was serious and for long.

The modern-day decline of Christianity in the western world may be compared to the situation in the Russian Empire before 1917. The revolution and the dramatic events which followed it have deep spiritual, as well as social and political, reasons. Over many years the aristocracy and intelligentsia had abandoned the faith, and were then followed by common people. His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia spoke of this in January 2017: "The fundamental rupture in the traditional way of life – and I am now speaking... of the spiritual and cultural self-consciousness of the people – was possible only for the reason that something very important had disappeared from peoples' lives, in the first instance those people who belonged to the elite. In spite of an outward prosperity and appearance, the scientific and cultural achievements, less and less place was left in peoples' lives for a living and sincere belief in God, an understanding of the exceptional importance of values belonging to a spiritual and moral tradition."

In the immediate post-war years Christianity played a huge role in the process of European integration, which was viewed in the context of the Cold War as one of the means of containing the expansion of atheist propaganda and communist ideology. The Vatican relied in its anti-communist propaganda upon European unity, upon the Christian democratic parties of Western Europe. The latter firmly believed that Western civilization is closely tied to Christian values, and had to be defended from the communist threat. Pope Pius XII supported the creation of a European community as "Christian Europe's historical mission."

The first president of the Federal Republic of Germany Theodor Heuss said that Europe was built on three hills: the Acropolis, which gave her the values of freedom, philosophy and democracy; the Capitol, which rep-

The Second Reading

Philippians 4:6-9
Reader at SMSG: Tricia Brassington

*(New Testament Page 167 in the Bibles)
Paul calls on the Philippian Christians and Christians of our own day, to fill their hearts with peace and their minds with what is good and true.*

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia! I chose you from the world that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, says the Lord. **Alleluia!**

The Gospel

Matthew 21: 33-43
*(New Testament Page 20 in the Bibles)
contains a parable in which Jesus refers to himself as the son and heir sent by the Father to take possession of Israel, the Lord's vineyard. Since they were familiar with the passage of Isaiah read as first reading, the Jews readily understood this parable.*

The Prayer of the Faithful

(Intercessor at SMSG: Dai Evans)

Priest: Gathered together in Christ as brothers and sisters, let us call to mind God's many blessings and ask him to hear the prayers which he himself inspires us to ask.

Intercessor: For our Bishop *Jonathan*, all the Church's ministers and the people they have been called to lead and serve..... Let us pray to the Lord:

V/. Lord, hear us.

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

For those who serve us in public office and for all those entrusted with the common good..... Let us pray to the Lord:

For all travellers, by land, air, or sea; for prisoners; and for those unjustly deprived of freedom..... Let us pray to the Lord:

For all sick and suffering people, both those in hospital and those ill at home,

and for those who care for them... Fiddy Abraham, Polly Barclay, Shirley Brown, Lesley, Ray Coats, Steve Cooper, Baby Ferguson, Peter Fulcher, Felix Hailstone, Russell Herbert, Jane Holman, Terry Mason, Sue Maton, Gum and Eva Newnham, Pete, Alan Shaw, Stacey, Dee Stobie, Lionel Stobie, Susan, Eric, Wendy... Let us pray to the Lord:

For those who have died, those who have shared with us in the faith of Christ and those whose faith is known to God alone...Joan Brown... *and for those whose anniversaries of death occur during this week, amongst them...*8th Cecil Hutchings (Priest), Francis Allen, Brenda Cox Powell, Charmaine Woodfield; 9th Mary Wright, William Wilkes; 10th William Wilmer, Les Lovesy; 11th Charles Read, Robert Bryant; 12th Ivan Bazeley, John Eales, Ivy Black, Marion Crook; 13th Graham Faithful; 14th Charlotte Ollington Let us pray to the Lord:

✠ Rest eternal grant to them, O Lord.

And let light perpetual shine upon them.

For all of us gathered in this holy place in faith, reverence, and love of God... Let us pray to the Lord:

Priest: Father, hear the prayers of your Church and, in your love, make up for what is lacking in our faith. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Reflection:

We are small shoots of the vine of Christ; here in this moment of communion we are sheltered for a while. Still, we know that this vine, Christ, has broken down all walls that separate. This vine grows where those in need can reach it and share its fruit.

We know that we must go from here and grow with Christ through another garden where love is crushed to drops of blood. We know that we must grow over and beyond all privileged walls to bring our fruit to a world in need.

PARISH NEWS & NOTICES

Funeral Rites of Joan Brown R.I.P.

Joan's mortal remains will be received into St Mary & St Giles on Tuesday 17th October at 4:00pm, and lie in state over night.. Her Funeral Mass will take place at 9:30am on Wednesday 18th October followed by Cremation at Crownhill Crematorium. Please pray for the repose of her soul, and for Cyril, Graham and Kieth in their loss. *Jesu, mercy. Mary, pray.*

Congratulations to our Church Gardeners: for their magnificent contribution to the Town's Britain in Bloom efforts. It is a delight to be able to convey the news that Stony in Bloom has won the Regional 'Britain in Bloom' Small Town Trophy with Gold. The church gardens were specifically praised in the Judges' report. Well done Tony and all our wonderful gardening volunteers. *Next week there will be a short article from Judy Deveson (from Stony in Bloom) in the Newsletter.*

Harvest Thanksgiving: Thank you to everyone who brought harvest gifts to our Parish Churches over the past two Sunday, especially to the children of our Church School. The quantity was so great that the Food Bank sent a van to collect it. Thanks also to David King for liaising with the Food Bank on our behalf.

2018 Fundraising & Diary Planning Meeting: On Tuesday 31st October at 7:00pm there will be a planning meeting at the Rectory. It is very important that all Parish Groups (even the more social ones) send a representative to this meeting, in order that all dates can be recorded in the Parish Diary managed by Lesley Salter. This helps avoid double-booking. Last year only two people attended this meeting which was unfortunate. Please would all Parish Groups confirm with Fr Ross and Lesley Salter who they are sending as their representatives to this very important meeting. Thank you.

All Saints & All Souls: All Saints Day will be observed at All Saints Church at 7:30pm on Wednesday 1st November with a Sung Mass.

All Souls Day (Thursday 2nd November) will, as is customary have three celebrations of Mass:
9:30am Low Mass at St Mary & St Giles
11:00am Low Mass at All Saints
7:30pm Sung Mass at St Mary & St Giles
Pious Lists are now posted in each church.

Lights' Switch-On Day - Christmas Fayre: is only 8 weeks away! Posters are available from today, and the list for offers of help is also posted on the free-standing noticeboard at St Mary & St Giles. Offers of small or sliceable cakes as well as mince pies etc. would be most appreciated. Suitable unwanted books would also be appreciated. On the Friday afternoon prior to the day after the lunchtime concert, Fr Ross will, as usual, be leading the working party that moves the seating around in church and lays out the tables for the stalls etc. Offers of help would be much appreciated, as would offers of help on the Saturday at 5pm to set the church ready for worship the next day. *Thank you.*

Christmas Tree Festival – All Saints Church, Calverton – 14th to 16th December 2017: We are holding our first Christmas Tree Festival on the above dates, and are writing to a significant number of local businesses and organisations to ascertain whether they would like be interested in placing a decorated Christmas Tree within the Church for this Festival. The theme for this first ever Christmas Tree Festival in our Parish is a choice of one of the many Christmas Carols – the height of your tree may be up to 6 feet, and Christmas Tree Lights would need to be battery operated. Parish Groups may also like to consider par-

ticipating.

The setting up of trees will take place between 2:00pm and 9:00pm on Wednesday 13th December, and dismantling will take place between 5:00pm and 7:00pm on Saturday 16th December. The Festival will be open from 11:00am to 7:00pm on the Thursday and Friday and from 11:00am to 5:00pm on the Saturday. We aim to be selling refreshments during the opening hours and would appreciate offers of help in serving and/or donations of cakes, mince pies etc.

Posters are available in each church to take away and display, and a list for volunteers to help with refreshments, and in assisting Eric West & Fr Ross on the Saturday evening with helping with dismantling and in then putting out all the candles for the Carol Service by Candlelight at 6:00pm on Sunday 17th December.

Thanking you in anticipation. Please contact Jill Barby for further information or to offer help on 01908 569245.

Metropolitan Hilarion of the Russian Orthodox Church issues a timely challenge to the West from the perspective of events that led to the completion of the Russian Revolution in October 1917:

On 22 September 2017, an international symposium on the Christian Future of Europe took place at the residence of Russia's Ambassador to Great Britain. The keynote address was delivered by Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations.

"Your Eminences and Your Excellencies, dear Mr. Ambassador, conference organizers and participants,

I cordially greet all of those gathered today at the Russian Embassy in London to partake in this conference dedicated to the question of the future of Christianity in Europe. This topic is not only not losing any of its relevance, but is resounding ever anew. Experts

believe that today Christianity remains not only the most persecuted religious community on the planet, but is also encountering fresh challenges which touch upon the moral foundations of peoples' lives, their faith and their values.

Recent decades have seen a transformation in the religious and ethnic landscape of Europe. Among the reasons for this is the greatest migration crisis on the continent since the end of the Second World War, caused by armed conflicts and economic problems in the countries of the Middle East and North Africa. According to figures by the European Union agency Frontex, more than 1.8 million migrants entered the EU in 2015 alone. Figures from the UN International Migration Report show that the number of migrants in Europe has increased from 49.3 million people in 2000 to 76.1 million people in 2015. According to research by the UN International Organization for Migration, throughout the world about 1.3 percent of the adult population, which comprises some 66 million people, in the forthcoming year intend to leave for another country in order to live permanently there. Approximately a third of this group of people – 23 million – are already making plans to move. 16.5 percent of potential migrants who were questioned responded that the countries at the top of their list are Great Britain, Germany and France.

The other reason for the transformation of the religious map of Europe is the secularization of European society. Figures in a British opinion poll indicate that more than half of the country's inhabitants – for the first time in history – do not affiliate themselves to any particular religion. 2942 people took part in an opinion poll conducted in 2016 by Britain's National Centre for Social Research: 53 percent of those who responded to the question on religious allegiance said that they do not belong to any religious confession. Among those aged from eighteen to twenty-five, the number of non-religious is higher – 71 percent. When similar research was carried out in 1983, only 31 percent of those questioned stated that they did not belong to any confession.

We can see an opposite trend in the Eastern European countries, in particular in Russia. A July opinion poll conducted in Rus-