

REFLECTION - 7th SUNDAY OF EASTER

"The First Novena"

The reading from Acts describes the community of disciples who went from the experience of the Ascension of the Risen Jesus to the safety of an "upper room" in Jerusalem to re-group and to re-think "What to do?" Pilgrims who go to Jerusalem in our modern era are frequently shown "the upper room" by tour guides, but we must understand that in 70 AD and then again about 135 AD, the city of Jerusalem attacked and much was destroyed. Where ever that "upper room" actually was, and whatever it actually looked like, and whatever contents in did contain, were lost entirely to history except in the memory of the early Christians. From that early Christian memory "the upper room" merited a place in the fond recollections of Christian believers about how and where the Church became public. Notice that the Twelve had been reduced to Eleven, plus Jesus' mother, and some other men and women. This text is the original scriptural setting from which evolved the custom of a Novena of Prayer before Pentecost, i.e., nine days of prayer, counting from a Thursday observance of the Ascension, i.e., on the second Thursday before Easter. This is a devotional prayer time between Jesus' departure and the Holy Spirit's public descent and conferral upon those disciples asking, "Lord, what do we do now?" Their religious, emotional and intellectual states are considered, by pious tradition, to be states of extreme stress, stunned wonderment, profound doubt and questioning, and walking confusion. Only the Pentecost Experience would change this, but that is not in the story yet. These troubled disciples spent much of their time in prayer during those "in between" days. Their collective example of devoting themselves with one accord to prayer is part of the Church's spiritual tradition ever since that earliest moment of Easter faith, both for lay Christians and for those who embrace religious community life. In any event, prayer was then, and is now, crucial. Jesus' High Priestly Prayer falls into that same tradition, particularly in commending each other to God's great love.

Our final excerpt in this Easter Season from the 1st Letter of Peter is a practical encouragement to those early Gentile Christians in Asia Minor to endure and glory in the persecution they endured for the Gospel. Suffering for its own sake is useless. Neither is suffering deserved punishment very noble. But, enduring suffering and recriminations undeservedly, merely because of their fidelity to the Risen Christ and his Gospel message, and out of love for the Church fellowship - this was suffering as Jesus suffered. As Paul phrased it, to "glory in the Cross of our Lord, Jesus Christ!" There has been, ever since Jesus' preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, a direct and necessary connection between being a disciple and embracing the cross in one's active life. This lengthy Easter Season is a time of remembrance that the glory of God's love and salvation far outweighs any temporary suffering and travail in this life.

Christ is Risen! He is truly Risen!
Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful
and enkindle in us the fire of your divine love!



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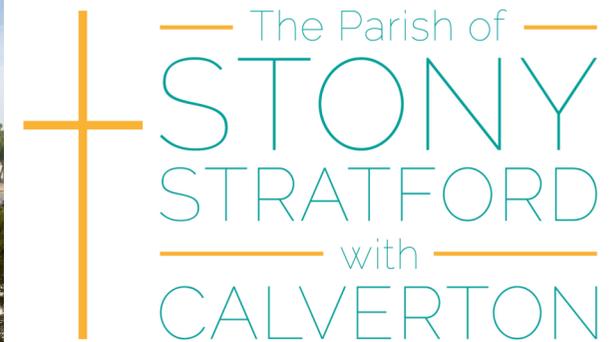


Arrangements for Banns, Holy Matrimony & Baptisms:
May be made by contacting Fr Ross on 01908 562148

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 SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

28th May AD 2017

Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed
through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God...



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 3
Offertory bearers:	Gerald & Heather Clough
Church Gardeners:	Team 4
Church Cleaners	Team 4

Worshipping Numbers last Sunday: 176

Weekday Worshipping Numbers w/e 20th May 35

Prayer Thought:

At every Mass, we are the assembled disciples of the risen Jesus waiting for the promised Holy Spirit to come to us and form us into his Church. It is by our participation in the Eucharist, the greatest prayer of the Church, that we both show that we are the Church and continually prepare ourselves to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The Collect

O God the King of glory, you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven: we beseech you, leave us not comfortless, but send your Holy Spirit to strengthen us and exalt us to the place where our Saviour Christ is gone before, 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 1:12-14

Reader at SMSG: Lydia Jones
Reader at All Saints: Rita Oakley

(New Testament Page 100 in the Bibles) tells how the apostles returned to Jerusalem after the ascension. There they joined Mary and the holy women and spent their time in continual prayer.

The Responsorial Psalm (from Psalm 27)

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

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

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

There is one thing I ask of the Lord,
for this I long,
to live in the house of the Lord,
all the days of my life,
to savour the sweetness of the Lord,
to behold his temple. ©

Entering the holy of holies with a cloud of incense is the temple reality that underlies the visions of the human figure entering heaven with clouds or of the LORD appearing in clouds upon the throne. Thus did Isaiah describe his call to prophesy: he saw the LORD enthroned in the temple, between the six-winged seraphim, and the house was filled with smoke (Isa. 6:1 - 4). Daniel saw a human figure "one like a son of man" coming with clouds of heaven to the Ancient of Days (Dan. 7:13). When Luke described the Ascension he said that Jesus was "lifted up, and a cloud took him" (Acts 1:9). Jesus was passing beyond the veil, beyond the constraints of time and place. The men in white said that he would return in the same way. John introduced the Book of Revelation with the assurance, "He is coming with the clouds" (Rev. 1:7), and John was granted his own vision of the LORD's return, which he recorded as the Mighty Angel coming from heaven wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head (Rev.10:1). Entering the holy of holies was entering heaven. And so these visions of a human figure going or coming with clouds must be understood in the temple setting of the high priest entering the holy of holies on the Day of Atonement.

Peter's sermon in Solomon's Portico shows that this was indeed how the early Church understood the departure of Jesus. He had gone to heaven as the great high priest, and would emerge again at the appointed time, that is, to bring renewal from the presence of the LORD. This is exactly what happened on the Day of Atonement, sin was judged and the earth was then cleansed and healed for the New Year. Hence Peter's warning: "Repent, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3:19 - 21). What had been ritualized annually in the Day of Atonement was happening in their own times through the self sacrifice of the great high priest Jesus. Jesus had passed through the veil into eternity; he was outside time and matter and so had passed into the eternal present, no longer limited by the particular time and place of first-century Palestine. This is the context, too, of the words in the "high-priestly prayer" in John 17. Jesus knew that he was about to pass through the veil, that he was returning to Day One, i.e. beyond and "before" the creation. Thus: "Father, glorify thou me in thy own presence with the glory I had with thee before the world was made" (John 17:5).

THIS WEEK IN OUR PARISH

TODAY: THE 7th 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: Feria

National Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham
9:30am "Squeals on Wheels" in the Parish Hall
8:00pm Bellringing Practice
Pray for: the Sick, Housebound & Handicapped

Tuesday: Feria

10:30am Mass + Elevenses at All Saints
Intention: Victims of Terrorism

Wednesday:

**Visitation of
The Blessed Virgin Mary**

6:00pm Rector in Parish Office for the arrangement of the Occasional Offices & Parish Business

7:30pm Mass at St Mary & St Giles
Intention: Women with Child

Thursday: St Justin, Martyr

10:30am Mass at St Mary & St Giles
Intention: those facing martyrdom

Friday: Ss Marcellinus & Peter, Martyrs

8:00am Mass at St Mary & St Giles (Ch)
12:00n Soup Lunch

followed by Organ Recital with Jonathan Kingston at St Mary & St Giles Church

7:30pm Parish Singers Rehearsal
Intention: For the Bishops of the Church

Saturday: St Charles Lwanga & Companions, Martyrs

Pray for: Visitors to our Parish Churches; the Church in Uganda, and the protection of all children and young people from sexual exploitation.

Next Sunday:

THE SOLEMNITY OF PENTECOST

8:30am Morning Prayer at St Mary & St Giles
9:30am **PARISH MASS at St Mary & St Giles**
6:00pm **EVENSONG at All Saints**
Intention: Our Parish

Readings next Sunday: Pentecost

1st Reading:	Acts 2: 1-11
Psalm:	104 (part)
2nd Reading:	1 Corinthians 12: 3b-7, 12-13
Gospel:	John 20: 19-23

held in the Parish Hall before the Summer Holidays - as with the actual course on an evening and a daytime.

The Memorial Registers: Fr Ross is about to update the Memorial Registers in both of our Parish Churches and would be grateful if those wishing to add new entries to the registers would complete one of the forms (available at the entrances to our churches) by NEXT SUNDAY. Please indicate on the form which Parish Church Register you would like the entry to be entered into. *Thank you.*

Christian Aid Week 2017: Thanks to all the people who took part in Christian Aid Week this year. The total so far is £469.17p with a few donations still to come. This comprised of £40 from a boot sale, £55 from a Christian Aid Brekkie, £374.17 from our regular door to door collectors and some donations from the Parish Family. A great result. *Richard Hearne*

Our Great High Priest:

In recent years there has been a revival of scholarly interest in the Old Testament as a background to the New Testament across the Christian traditions. One of the most significant contributors is Margaret Barker, a Cambridge theologian (and Methodist), whose work has been very widely acknowledged. A number of her essays are online. (if you google her name you will find her home page, where more of her writings can be discovered).

In July 2008 Margaret Barker was awarded a DD by the Archbishop of Canterbury "in recognition of her work on the Jerusalem Temple and the origins of Christian Liturgy, which has made a significantly new contribution to our understanding of the New Testament and opened up important fields for research."

Having just celebrated Ascension Day, there is a key passage from Margaret Barker's book 'The Great High Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy' which shows how central the Ascension was to the early Christians. (It also vindicates all those teachers, theologians and hymn-writers in the Anglo-Catholic tradition who have emphasized the Ascension as primarily a celebration of the Lord's high-priestly ministry.) Her

book is a real eye opener and leads us to far greater appreciation of the radical nature of Jesus, his Apostles and the influence they had. It is not a slim volume, but is all the better for that, and I highly recommend it.

So, from pages 221 - 222 of 'The Great High Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy':

Only the high priest was permitted to pass through the veil and to stand before the throne or, in the desert tradition, before the ark, and he was only permitted to do this once a year on the Day of Atonement. The words of Leviticus 16:2 could imply that at an earlier period, the high priest had entered more frequently: "Tell your brother Aaron not to come at all times into the holy place within the veil, before the mercy seat which is upon the ark, lest he die." Entering the holy of holies was a terrifying experience, because the LORD appeared to the high priest "in the cloud upon the kapporet". Before making the blood offering, the high priest took incense into the holy of holies, and this seems to have been a protection for him. "Put the incense on the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of incense may cover the kapporet which is upon the testimony, lest he die" (Lev. 16:13). In later texts, the high priest carries a "fire pan" in to the holy of holies and places it before the ark. Then he puts the incense on to the charcoal, and fills the holy of holies with smoke (m. Yoma 5:1). Other texts, however, imply that there was a golden altar, within the veil of the temple. The Letter to the Hebrews is clear; in the holy of holies stood the ark and the golden altar of incense (Heb. 9:3-4). The Hebrew text of 1 Kings 6:20 - 22, however, is not so clear, but could have described a golden altar within the veil. Unfortunately, the line, "He covered with gold the altar that belonged to the holy of holies" (1 Kgs. 6:22) does not appear in the LXX, and the text of v. 20 is disordered. The Vulgate, which is quite clear that there was an altar within the veil, was translated at the end of the fourth century CE by Jerome, who would have known the Letter to the Hebrews and thus would have read the ambiguities of 1 Kings 6:20 in the light of the later Christian text. However the incense was actually offered, the tradition is clear that the high priest needed the incense as protection when he entered the holy of holies, and that the incense used in the holy of holies was a special blend. It was deemed "most holy", and anyone who used that blend outside the holy of holies was "cut off from his people" (Exod. 30:34-38).

O Lord, hear my voice when I call;
have mercy and answer.
Of you my heart has spoken:
'Seek his face.' ©

The Second Reading 1 Peter 4:13-16
Reader at SMSG: Sister Janet

*(New Testament Page 198 in the Bibles)
teaches that a share in the sufferings of Christ guarantees a share in his glory.*

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia! I will not leave you orphans, says the Lord; I will come back to you, and your hearts will rejoice. **Alleluia!**

The Gospel John 17:1-11a

*(New Testament Page 95 in the Bibles)
Jesus prays that his sufferings may give glory to God by bringing salvation to mankind. He prays for his disciples who will be alone in the world after his death.*

The Prayer of the Faithful

(Intercessor at SMSG: Sister Janet)

Priest: My brothers and sisters, let us join our prayers with those of our Saviour Christ, seeking the Father's blessing and the gifts of the Spirit.

Intercessor: Lord Jesus Christ, great high priest, living for ever to intercede for us, pray for the Church, your broken body in the world . . .

V/. Jesus Christ, pray to the Father.

R/. **Jesus Christ, send us the Spirit.**

Lord Jesus Christ, king of righteousness, enthroned at the right hand of the majesty on high, pray for the world, and make it subject to your gentle rule . . .

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of Man, drawing humanity into the life of God, pray for your brothers and sisters in need, distress or sorrow . . . *Fiddy Abraham, Polly Barclay, Gerry Bonner, Doreen Brooks, Shirley Brown, Steve Cooper, Peggy Fisher, Russell Herbert, Jane Holman, Terry Matson, Sue Maton, Gum & Eva Newnham,*

Rosalie Osbourne, Pete, Ron Smart, Tony Oakley, Wendy

Lord Jesus Christ, pioneer of our salvation, bringing us to glory through your death and resurrection, receive into your kingdom those who have died trusting your promises... *Terry Crook, Larry Francis, June Jeffery...* and for those whose anniversaries of death occur during this week...**28th** *Ellen Holman, Harry Culver;* **29th** *Henry Hayle, Thomas Haseldine, Harry Taylor;* **30th** *Thekla Russell, Eva Smith;* **31st** *Marjory Zani, Edith Tompkins, Angel Power;* **1st June** *May Coats, Thomas Grimsley;* **2nd** *Herbert Lunn, Lilian Emms;* **3rd** *Emeric Ware, James Barry*

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

Lord Jesus Christ, Lord of all things, ascending far above the heavens and filling the universe, grant us the gifts needed for work in your service . . .

Priest: Lord Jesus Christ, keep the Church in the unity of the Spirit and in the bond of your peace, and bring the whole created order to worship at your feet; for you are alive and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Communion Reflection:

'We give thanks to you, Holy Father, for your holy name, which you have made to dwell in our hearts, and for the knowledge and faith and immortality which you have made known to us through Jesus your child: to you be glory for ever. You, almighty Master, created all things for your name's sake; you gave food and drink to men for their enjoyment, so that they might give thanks to you; and on us you have bestowed spiritual food and drink, and eternal life through your child. Above all, we give thanks to you because you are mighty; to you be glory for ever. Remember, Lord, your Church: to you be glory for ever. You almighty Master, created all things for your name's sake; you gave food and drink to men for their enjoyment, so that they might give thanks to you; and on us you have bestowed spiritual food and drink, and eternal life through your child. Above all, we give thanks to you because you are mighty; to you be glory for ever. Remember, Lord, your Church: deliver it from all evil, make it perfect in your love; make it holy and gather it together from the four winds into your Kingdom which you have prepared for it: for the power and the glory are yours for ever.'
(From the Didache - late first century).

PARISH NEWS & NOTICES

All Saints Coffee Morning: Thank you to everyone who organised, helped or supported the Coffee Morning held for All Saints Restoration Fund yesterday.. About £167.00 was raised - with monies that came in after the event. Jill Barby would be delighted to hear from those who think that it was worthwhile repeating, and from those who might be able to help. Thank you.

N.B. The Raffle that began with the coffee morning will not be drawn until after Evensong on the 4th June. Tickets may be obtained at All Saints or from Jill Barby.

Future Fundraising Events for All Saints: Jill Barby would be delighted to hear from all those who are willing to help with future fundraising

Thy Kingdom Come: included with last week's Newsletter was a Novena Prayer Leaflet and a bookmark for our Bibles so that we can all participate in the Archbishops of Canterbury & York's global prayer movement, 'Thy Kingdom Come.'



If you did not get one last week there are a few copies left. This initiative invites Christians around the world to pray between Ascension Day (25th May) and Pentecost Sunday (4th June) for more people to come to know Jesus Christ. What started out as an invitation

from the Archbishops' of Canterbury and York in 2016 to the Church of England has grown into an international and ecumenical call to prayer.

The hope is that:

- people will commit to pray with God's world-wide family - as a church, individually or as a family;
- churches will hold prayer events, such as 24-7 prayer, prayer stations and prayer walks, across the UK and in other parts of the world;
- people will be empowered through prayer by the Holy Spirit, finding new confidence to be witnesses for Jesus Christ.

"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses ..to the ends of the earth. When he had said this..he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight..Then they returned to Jerusalem ... and were constantly devoting themselves to prayer...

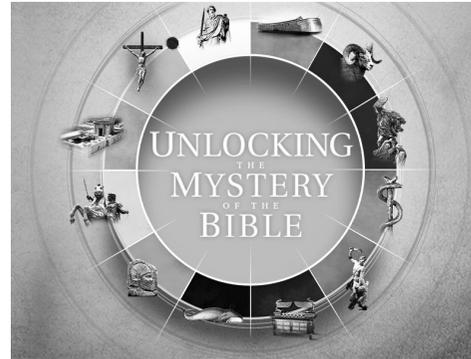
When the day of Pentecost had come they were all together in one place... All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit... and that day about three thousand persons were added." Acts 1,2

"In praying 'Thy Kingdom Come' we all commit to playing our part in the renewal of the nations and the transformation of communities." Archbishop Justin Welby

'Chronological' Bibles: After two deliveries 30 people have bought copies of these Bibles, which is very good and shows an interest in the Scriptures amongst us. Following the most recent delivery a number of people have said that they forgot to order a copy. I am now taking orders for a third delivery. Each copy costs £14.99 - a saving of £10 on the publishers price. I would be grateful if requests for a copy to be included

in the next order could be placed with me by 31st May. *Thank you, Fr Ross*

Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible: For many of us the Scriptures can seem a mystery, and the 'Cover to Cover' edition of the Scriptures can help us make more sense of its historical timeline. Of course, even aids like this can lead to further questions and even a thirst for greater knowledge. Therefore, to encourage us all in our reading of Holy Scripture I am preparing to launch an excellent DVD based Course on the Scriptures as soon as possible. The 8 Week Course is called 'Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible' and I have posted a trailer for the Course on the Parish Facebook page. If you are a Facebook member then simply send a request to join our group: 'Parish of Stony



Stratford with Calverton.'

This Autumn will see the launch of this Course. Unfortunately, current diary commitments do not allow for a sensible running of the Course without having to stop and start. As well as an evening Course, there will also be a daytime Course as well; as I am aware that not everyone is able to attend evening sessions. Each participant will have a high quality booklet, Bible Timeline and bookmark to aid us as we go through the Course.

One session of the Course will be held at 7:00pm on Tuesday evenings and another at 2:00pm on Thursday afternoons - both at the Rectory. The Course will be begin in the week beginning 17th September with the meetings in that and subsequent weeks being at 7:00pm on Tuesday 19th September and at 2:00pm on Thursday 21st September. The Course is eight sessions long and there will be a break of two weeks after the first four sessions. The Course will be repeated twice next year, hopefully on different days, so as to allow as many of us as possible to participate.

The Programme is as follows:

Session 1
Tues 19th/Thurs 21st Sept
Introduction & The Bible Timeline Chart

Session 2
Tues 26th/Thurs 28th Sept
Early World

Session 3
Tues 2nd/Thurs 4th Oct
Patriarchs

Session 4
Tues 10th/Thurs 12th Oct
Egypt and Exodus, Desert Wanderings

Session 5
Tues 31st Oct/Thurs 2nd Nov
Conquest and Judges, Royal Kingdom

Session 6
Tues 7th/Thurs 9th Nov
Divided Kingdom, Exile, Return

Session 7
Tues 14th/Thurs 16th Nov
Maccabean Revolt, Messianic Fulfilment Part 1

Session 8
Tues 21st/Thurs 23rd Nov
Messianic Fulfilment Part 2, The Church

Please pray for the success of this course. A 'overview of the Course will be