

Lenten Discipline

Many Christians adopt a new spiritual discipline for the period of Lent. George Herbert recognizes that human frailty may well result in many of those Lenten disciplines faltering before the season is over, but he reassures us that any spiritual discipline – even an incomplete, imperfect one – puts us on Christ's pathway, where we will be more likely to meet Him.

From Lent GEORGE HERBERT

Welcome deare feast of Lent: who loves not thee,
He loves not Temperance,⁽¹⁾ or Authoritie,
But is compos'd of passion.
The Scriptures bid us fast; ⁽²⁾ the Church sayes, now:
Give to thy Mother, what thou wouldst allow
To ev'ry Corporation.

... It's true, we cannot reach Christ's fortieth day;
Yet to go part of that religious way,
Is better than to rest:
We cannot reach our Saviour's purity;
Yet are bid, Be holy ev'n as he.⁽³⁾
In both let's do our best.

Who goeth in the way which Christ hath gone,
Is much more sure to meet with him, than one
That travelleth by-ways:
Perhaps my God, though he be far before,
May turn, and take me by the hand, and more
May strengthen my decays.

Yet Lord instruct us to improve our fast
By starving sin and taking such repast
As may our faults control:
That ev'ry man may revel at his door,
Not in his parlour; banqueting the poor,
And among those his soul.

1 "Temperance" – moderation, self-restraint.

2 "fast" – to eat little or to abstain from certain foods as a religious discipline.

3 "You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48).

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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 Nicola Crompton on 07979 653515



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

THE EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (Quinquagesima)

26th February AD 2017

The lesson in this morning's Gospel is evident : God must have first place in our lives, if we really believe in a future, eternal life, as all Christians, and most other sane men do. But we still must earn our living and work our passage through life. What Christ is warning us against is that we must not get so attached to, and so enslaved by, the things of this world, that we neglect God and our own eternal happiness.

Most of us will say: "there is little danger that we shall get enslaved by the wealth of this world – we have so little of it." But a man can get so attached to the little he has and so anxious to increase it, that he can cut God out of his life and forget the one thing necessary. Remember that a man can be drowned as easily in a tub of water as he could be in the deepest point in the Atlantic ocean. It is not the possession of the things of this world that Christ forbids, but letting the things of this world possess us. While we make the wealth and the goods of this earth serve our eternal purpose we can be true followers of Christ, but if we let them enslave us to the exclusion of that purpose then we are indeed on the wrong road.



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 2
Offertory bearers:	Parish Singers
Church Gardeners:	Team 2
Church Cleaners	Team 4

Worshipping Numbers Last Sunday: 139

Worshipping Numbers on the weekdays prior: 32

Prayer Thought: A sure measure of the depth of a loving relationship is the extent to which we put our trust in the other person. Today we reflect on the challenge to trust totally in God for everything, knowing that God cares for us as he cares for the birds of the air, or as a mother cares for her baby. Only such total trust can free us to set our hearts upon the kingdom of God as the most important goal in our lives.

The Collect

Merciful Lord, grant to your faithful people pardon and peace: that we may be cleansed from all our sins and serve you with a quiet mind; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD (SIT)

The First Reading Isaiah 49:14-15
Reader at SMSG: Lydia Jones
Reader at All Saints: Eilish Friedman

(Old Testament Page 619 in the Bibles)
God tells us that he never forgets his people.

The Responsorial Psalm (from Psalm 62)

R/. In God alone is my soul at rest.

In God alone is my soul at rest;
my help comes from him.
He alone is my rock, my stronghold,
my fortress: I stand firm. ®

In God alone be at rest, my soul;
for my hope comes from him.
He alone is my rock, my stronghold,
my fortress, I stand firm. ®

In God alone is my safety and glory,
the rock of my strength.
Take refuge in God all you people.
Trust him at all times.
Pour out your hearts before him. ®

The Second Reading

1 Corinthians 4:1-5
Reader at SMSG: Sister Janet

(New Testament Page 140 in the Bibles)
Paul reminds the Christians at Corinth that

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

THIS WEEK IN OUR PARISH

8th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (Quinquagesima)

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**

1:00pm Holy Baptism of Gracie-Mai Fisher at St Mary & St Giles

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: Shrove Tuesday

10:30am **Mass + Elevesades at All Saints**

6:00pm Evening Prayer

6:30pm Confessions at St Mary & St Giles

Intention: For all Confessors and Penitents

Wednesday: ASH WEDNESDAY

9:30am **Mass at St Mary & St Giles**

11:00am Interment of the Mortal Remains of Mr & Mrs Popperwell at All Saints

11:30am **Mass at All Saints**

Followed by Lent Lunch

7:30pm **PARISH MASS at St Mary & St Giles**

Imposition of Ashes at all Masses

8:30pm Ladies Group in the Parish Hall
The Rector to speak.

Intention: For the grace to observe a Holy Lent

Thursday: Feria

10:30am **Mass at St Mary & St Giles**

Intention: For the Sick

Friday: Feria

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

10:30am Women's World Day of Prayer at St Mary & St Giles

7:30pm Parish Singers Rehearsal

Intention: For the Faithful Departed

Saturday: Feria

10:00am Coffee Morning in Parish Hall

12:00n Lent Lunch in Parish Hall

Pray for: Visitors to our Parish Churches

Next Sunday: 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

Readings next Sunday: 1st Sunday of Lent

1st Reading: Genesis 2: 7-9; 3: 1-7

Psalm: 51 (part)

2nd Reading: Romans 5: 12-19

Gospel: Matthew 4: 1-11

on Ash Wednesday, there will also be lunches held on the Saturdays of Lent. A list of the dates can be found on the free-standing notice board at St Mary & St Giles, and offers of groups of volunteers to 'host' each lunch and provide soup and/or bread & cheese would be very much appreciated.

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 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

his authority as an apostle does not come from them. It comes from Christ, whose servant he is.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia! The word of the Lord is living and active, discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. **Alleluia!**

The Gospel

Matthew 6:24-34

(New Testament Page 5 in the Bibles) Our Lord tells us not to let the worries of this life lead us to forget God. God's providence is very much a reality.

The Prayer of the Faithful

(Intercessor at SMSG: Sister Janet)

Priest: In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ, let us pray to the Father.

Intercessor: O God, the creator and preserver of all, we pray for people in every kind of need; make your ways known on earth, your saving health among all nations.

V/. Lord, in your mercy

R/. **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for the good estate of the catholic Church.....; guide and govern us by your good Spirit, that all who profess and call themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace and in righteousness of life.

We commend to your fatherly goodness all those who are any ways afflicted or distressed, in mind, body or estate... Fiddy Abraham, Gerry Bonner, Shirley Brown, Steve Cooper, Larry Francis, Jane Holman, Terry Mason, Sue Maton, Pete, Ron Smart, Tony Oakley, Wendy...; comfort and relieve them in their need, give them patience in their sufferings, and bring good out of all their afflictions.

We remember those who have gone before us in the peace of Christ... Henry Blake, Muriel Francis, Eileen Haseldine,

Cyril Millward, Betty Spicer... and for those whose anniversaries of death occur during this week...**26th** Sarah Shillingford; **27th** Ellen Baker, Charles Tracey; **28th** Ann Gent, Florence Hayle; **1st March** Ernest Healey, Russell Poppleton, Fred Briggs, Margaret Stirling, Bertha Humphreys; **2nd** Michael Whetstone; **3rd** William Smith, Edward Eglesfield, Norman Gascoine; **4th** Cecil Powell, Frederick Coats, Stella Willson..., and we give you praise for all your faithful ones, with whom we rejoice in the communion of saints.

✠ Rest eternal grant to them, O Lord.

And let light perpetual shine upon them.

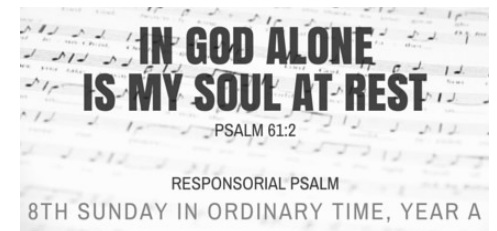
Priest: God our Father, these are the prayers of your children who are beloved to you in your Son. We present them to you in full joy and confidence through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

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

Shrove Tuesday: While the world will gorge on Pancakes - even calling it 'Pancake Day (!) - Holy Church reminds us through this day to prepare for the Lenten Fast by doing two things:

A) to remove the fat and sweet things from our homes - hence why people used up the fat and sugar to make pancakes - so as to eat more plainly during Lent as part of the Fast. And it is important to note that 'Fasting' does not mean going without food - that is 'Abstinence' - rather, it having one main meal per day and two simple meals rather than rich food. It is also important to note that the Fasting rules do not apply to those children and young people who have not been Confirmed, to those over the age of 59 years, nor to those with a medical condition which requires them to eat at specific times. The Church does encourage a period of abstinence before Mass for those not included in the exemption from Fasting.

B) Confession: 'Shrove' comes from the word 'Shriven' which means to have made a confession of one's sins to a priest. It is customary to begin the Holy Season of Lent with a conscience unburdened with sin and to maintain that freedom from sin with the help of the Holy Spirit, so as to celebrate Holy Week and Easter in a state of grace. Confessions may be made at St Mary & St Giles on Tuesday evening of this week beginning at 6:30pm.

Why should I go to Confession?

The Faith *"does not bind us to confess our sins indiscriminately to everybody; it allows them to remain hidden from all other men save one, to whom she bids us reveal the innermost recesses of our heart and show ourselves as we are. There is only*

this one man in the world whom she orders us to undeceive, and she binds him to an inviolable secrecy, which makes this knowledge to him as if it were not. Can we imagine anything more charitable and pleasant? And yet the corruption of man is such that he finds even this law harsh"

Blaise Pascal

How great is the Sacrament of Confession? Oh. You don't find it great? It's hard, scary, humiliating? Why should we confess to a priest when we can confess "straight to God"?

It seems to me that Confession should be a little hard, scary, and humiliating. We only need to go to Confession when we've done something wrong. When we've taken the "easy" way out, instead of striving to live the right way. Sin, at least the particular sin that tempts us individually, always seems easy at the time. It's the quick way to get what we want - or what we think we want, at least. Pornography is a lot easier than working at a relationship (especially these days with the internet). Abortion certainly seems easier than carrying an unexpected pregnancy to term. Lying is definitely easier than owning up to our own inadequacies, defects, and faults!

And of course it is precisely for this reason that the Church tells us that we must Confess our sins to another person, the priest. If we want God's forgiveness, we must forgo taking the easy way out of things, and we must be brave and humble enough to tell the absolute truth about ourselves to at least one person. At bottom, Confession is about repentance - that is, turning away from the very things that got us into this sinful mess in the first place, and doing the opposite! It is about being honest, to God, to the priest, and especially to ourselves.

That is, precisely, why God has asked us to confess to a priest. Not because he's so much holier or better, but simply because he is "other". In my earlier Christian Life I was involved with the Pentecostal Church in my home town, and believed that I could confess directly to God, it was easy enough to convince myself that either what I had done wasn't really that bad, or, on the other hand, that I was actually, truly sorry for my sins, when I would easily, even flip-pantly, toss up a "Sorry God, please forgive me!" On the other hand, when I was deeply sorry for my sins, God often seemed distant and unhearing of my heartfelt cries to Him. In the Confessional, though, He is hearing, and through the priest can both gently prod me to be more thoroughly honest, and more thoroughly sorry, and at the same time, through the grace-filled words of Absolution, can tangibly tell me that God has indeed forgiven me, and that I am free from my sins because God has said so, and not my own vain hopes or doubts! Because the priest is another person, I can interact with and hear him when he responds to me. Because he is another Christ, because he acts *in persona Christi* sacramentally, I know that his words are indeed the tender, forgiving words of Jesus Himself!

Jesus promised that special, sacramental grace, when, on that Resurrection Sunday, He told none but His Apostles that He was sending them as He Himself had been sent - and breathing on them the Holy Spirit, He commissioned them to forgive people's sins (cf. John 20:20-23).

So yes, when we go in to the Confessional, weighed down by our sins, our sorrows, and our doubts, when our pride recoils at having to admit that we actually aren't perfect, holy people, Con-

fession seems ominous, difficult, and horrid. But it is not Confession, but our sin, that is horrid. When we leave Confession, we in turn feel lighter than air, for we have left that burden of sin in that room with Jesus, who will take it as far away from us as the east is from the west (cf. Psalm 103:12).



1st March - Ash Wednesday Masses: this year as well as the 9:30am Said Mass and the 7:30pm Sung Mass at St Mary & St Giles, there will be a celebration of Mass at 11:30am in All Saints to be followed by a Lent Lunch of Soup, Bread and Cheese. Offers of soup, bread & cheese and help would be appreciated. Donations will go towards our Lenten Charity: The Additional Curates Society.

Women's World Day of Prayer: This year the service within the Parish be offered at St Mary & St Giles, at 10.30am on Friday 3rd March. Everyone is very welcome, and if you are able to participate we look forward to welcoming you. Pat Eales and Jenny Rowilson.

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.

Lenten Devotional Booklets: There are 3 spare copies at £2.99 each left. Please see Fr Ross if you would like a copy.

Lent Lunches: as well as the Lent Lunch