

Twenty first Sunday in Ordinary Time, 25th August 2019

“Will there be only a few saved?”

In today's Gospel Jesus was asked whether only a few would be saved, but he did not give a straight answer to the question. He suggested that we should not speculate about others, but rather look to ourselves: “Try your best to enter by the narrow door, because, I tell you, many will try to enter and will not succeed.”

Jesus is speaking to first-century Jews, people absolutely confident that being Jewish meant they were saved. One Jewish rabbi at the time of Jesus was so full of assurance that he wrote, “To have one's abode in Palestine is to be certain of eternal life.” Another said, “No circumcised man will ever see hell.” Against such complacency, Jesus warned that they might see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of heaven, but find themselves turned away. And in their place would come others from the east, west, north and south. This meant Gentiles, non-Jews, coming into heaven, which would have been a shock to the devout Jews, even though it had been prophesied by Isaiah in today's first reading, “I am coming to gather the nations of every language.”

There are some Christians who believe they are saved, no matter how they live. Far from being harsh, Jesus is teaching about the wonderful kindness and mercy of God. “There's a wideness in God's mercy like the wideness of the sea.” There are going to be innumerable people from east, west, north and south coming into the kingdom of heaven. We may think about members of our own families and friends; people of different faiths and traditions. While the Church has the obligation to evangelise everyone, those who with a sincere heart are moved by grace, following their conscience, despite not knowing the Gospel, may achieve eternal salvation.

How, then, are we saved? We do not have to be saints to enter the kingdom of God. We are not to be alarmed as though there was a certain standard to be attained. We will get there by following Jesus, by walking in his footsteps, trying our best to walk with him, as he put it, “by the narrow door”; trusting him to forgive us when we fail, being penitent and persevering in our faith. What gets us to heaven is God's loving mercy, and this same mercy is what stops us taking our salvation for granted, as though it does not matter what we do or how we behave.

In urging us to try our best to enter “by the narrow door”, Jesus stresses that he is calling people from the ends of the earth into the kingdom of God. It is by God's loving mercy that we come to heaven, and by this same mercy that we seek to love and to do God's will.

As I leave St Michael's I would like to thank all of you for your help, support and encouragement over the past seventeen years, and for the affection that you have shown me. It has been a privilege to have been your Parish Priest. I will miss you all! I know that you will warmly welcome Fr Sidon Sagar, your new Parish Priest, and Father Carlo Mazzotta, who will be looking after St David's, Stanwell.

Farewell Reception. I hope that many of you will be able to come to my Farewell Reception in the Parish Hall on **Friday evening, 27th September 2019 (7.00pm to 9.00pm)**. Children are, of course, welcome. I look forward to seeing you!

Street Market, Clarendon Road. On Saturday, 31st August 2019 from lunchtime onwards, residents will be selling their wares from their front gardens along Clarendon Road. Come and buy!

Fr Tom Quinn RIP. Cardinal Vincent Nichols will celebrate the Funeral Mass for Father Tom Quinn on Tuesday 3rd September at 12noon in St John Fisher Church, Shepperton. On Monday 2nd September Bishop John Sherrington will celebrate the Virgil Mass for him at 7.30pm.

Parish Office. During the school holidays the Parish Office will open **ONLY on Friday mornings (9.30am to 12.30pm)**. It will re-open on Monday 2nd September. Please leave a message on the answer phone (01784 252230) or send an email (ashford@rcdow.org.uk) and I will respond as soon as I am able to do so.

Fr Jim Overton

Offertory Collection. Last week's collection was £1,536.02 – Envelopes £426.25; Bankers Orders £600.00 (weekly average); Loose Plate £509.77

The Bucket Collection in July and August is for Sam Beare Hospice.

Readings for 1st September, 22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time
Ecclesiasticus 3: 17-20, 28-29; Hebrews 12; 18-19, 22-24; Luke 14: 1, 7-14

Emergency Exits: In the event of an emergency, please note that the three fire exits from the church are the main church entrance, the side door to the left of St Joseph's Chapel, and the main entrance to the hall.

PLEASE PRAY

For all the sick and housebound in our parish.

For anniversaries in August since 2012. William Andrew, Patricia Cowling, Gary Dale, John Field, Tom Kelly, Catherine King, Keith MacKenzie, Jimmy Rowan, Michael Sugrue, Irene Tompsett, Gilbert Francis Van Gramberg.

For Fr Voytek Przjalkowski and the parishioners of St David's, Stanwell in the Upper Thames Deanery.

For the Holy Father's Prayer Intention that families, through their life of prayer and love, become ever more clearly 'schools of true human growth.'

Mass Intentions 25th August – 1st September

Sunday 25th	Vigil Mass Saturday, 6.00pm	Ann Hawkins RIP
	9.15am	The people of the parish
	11.00am	Agostinho Barretto RIP
	6.00pm	Mary and Michael Braganza RIP
Mon 26th	9.15am	Holy Souls
Tues 27th	9.15am	Holy Souls
Wed 28th	9.15am	Holy Souls
Fri 30th	9.15am	Jimmy Rowan RIP
Sat 31st	9.15am	A special intention (PL)
Sunday 1st	Vigil Mass Saturday, 6.00pm	David Crawley RIP
	9.15am	Michael Bentley RIP
	11.00am	Bernie Driscoll RIP
	6.00pm	The people of the parish

Sunday Mass

(Vigil) Saturday, 6.00pm

9.15am Family (Folk Group, Children's Liturgy of the Word)

11.00am Sung (First Sunday, Ordinary of the Mass sung in Latin)

6.00pm

Holy Days of Obligation Mass

9.15am and 7.00pm

Weekday Mass

9.15am Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday

Eucharistic Adoration

Saturday 9.45 – 10.15am

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturday 10.15 – 10.45am (*and at any time by appointment*)

Sacrament of Baptism

Normally celebrated on a Saturday once a month. To arrange a Baptism contact
Baptism Catechist Lee Gibson on 07713 760281 or lee.gibson.2na@btinternet.com

St Michael's Catholic Church

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This parish is part of the Westminster Catholic Diocese Trustee Charity no. 233699

Parish Priest: Mgr James Overton

Parish Secretary: Mrs Shenda Holmes

Summer Parish Office Hours: Friday 09.00am - 1.00pm
