

Twenty seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time, 6th October 2019

“Increase our faith”

“The road to life was bright. It trenched before my sight. The Lord was at my side to be my friend and guide. And so, I started out. But then the sky grew dark, and the road grew steep and stark. Rocks and ruts cut my feet. I scarce could travel on. I turned and cried ‘my Lord! Why this pain; why this plight? Why these ruts; why these rocks? Why this darkness? Where’s the light? I cannot carry on’. The Lord replied, ‘my child! Why this fear; why this fright? Where’ your faith? Where’ your trust? Love chose this road for you. Jut trust and travel on.” – Anonymous.

It is good to keep these great saints in mind when we turn to the Gospel today. There is a harshness in Jesus' parable. He talks of servants (or, in some translations, slaves) and masters, a common reality in Jesus' time. He is attacking those religious leaders who thought that they deserved a reward for following God's law. It was as though they felt God owed them something. It is a common danger in religion to think we can save ourselves by our own good works; all God needs to do is to acknowledge what we have achieved by ourselves. God is there to hand out the prizes.

Jesus tells this parable to deflate our self-righteousness. After all, there is no equality between master and servant. Would you expect the master to tell the servant, after a day in the fields, to come and have a meal? No, it is more likely the servant would have to serve the master before eating his or her own supper. Why would the master be grateful to the servant, who is only doing his or her duty? Jesus is puncturing false ideas. If you see God with the eyes of faith you will realise that God is our creator and all that we have is God's gift. All that we possess we have received. In fact, we are called to imitate God's generosity. When Jesus tells his disciples they must forgive seven times, they ask for an increase of faith. They need grace to trust God. Jesus tells them that with only a little faith they can perform the impossible.

We can still behave like the Pharisees and the other religious people of Jesus' time. If we keep the rules, go to church and avoid scandal, then surely we deserve to be rewarded? It sounds as though we are saving ourselves. And this reflects a deep feeling in modern society that demands the right to decide things for ourselves. We need to hear Jesus' call to faith with its truths which liberate us from self-centredness and idolatry. Faith teaches us that God is our creator. God has given us our life and it is a pure gift. And at the heart of that grace is God's love, a love that is boundless and extravagant. It is a love that lays down its life on the cross. It is a love that gives itself to us in the Eucharist, body and blood. Again, it is sheer gift, not something we can claim credit for.

Therefore, we need to keep the saints close to us. Their lives give flesh to the Gospel. We can see God's love taking human form in their lives. They are wounded by divine love and respond with an extravagance that shocks us. They experience God not as a slave master but as a Lord who has emptied himself in love and shared our sufferings. They delight in God's service and are happy to say, “We are merely servants: we have done no more than our duty.” A song that would help you on the path of today's Gospel for a lifetime would be “Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me on” by Thomas A. Dorsey sung by Jim Reeves.

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CAFOD Harvest Fast Day, Friday 4th October. There is a retiring collection this weekend for CAFOD. You will find envelopes in the narthex.

Prison Sunday, 13th October. If you would like to support the work of PACT (Prison Advice and Care Trust) you will find donation envelopes in the narthex. Please return your donation next weekend.

The Pelican. You will all be delighted that the Pelican has now been installed. Firstly, I would like to thank Fr Jim for leaving us this wonderful legacy and love, and also Peter Foster, the sculptor, for making Fr Jim's wish a reality. I would like to thank all of you who have generously donated towards the cost of the Pelican. There is still a small shortfall, so if you would like to make a contribution, it would be greatly appreciated.

Fr Jim's Reception. I take the opportunity to thank each one of you, for all your love you have shown to Mgr James (Fr. Jim), which was visible on the day of his Farewell Reception, I would ask you to keep him always in your precious prayers for his good health and blessing of the Lord. Thanks a million.

Canonisation of Blessed John Henry Newman. Pope Francis will canonize Cardinal Newman on 13th October at a Mass in Piazza San Pietro in the Vatican, along with four other Blesseds (including an Indian - Sister Mariam Thresia). There are two approved miracles attributed to the intercession of Cardinal Newman, both originating in the United States.

St Michael's News. The September edition of our parish quarterly magazine is now available in the narthex. My thanks to Julian Game for an excellent edition. Please do take a copy home with you. It is also available on the parish website.

Monthly Sunday Teas and Coffees will take place next Sunday 13th October after 9.15am Mass.

Signing Secondary School forms. I will be available to sign Certificates of Catholic Practice on **Monday 7th October 2019 in Michael's School from 2.30pm – 3.30pm;** and also **in the presbytery from 6.15pm to 6.45pm.** It would be a great help to me if you would come only at these times and not seek individual appointments.

First Holy Communion 2020. The First Holy Communion Mass will take place on **Saturday 16th May 2020.**

Application forms for children in Year 3 and above are now available on the parish website and **should be made online ONLY.** Please go to the parish website - <https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/ashford/> to download the application form. On the parish website you will need to select the Sacramental Preparation page and then select First Holy Communion.

Please return the completed application form to **ashfordcomm@rcdow.org.uk by 31st October 2019 (DO NOT SEND TO THE PARISH EMAIL ADDRESS).**

Bucket Collections. Thank you for donations of £128.51 during July and August for the Sam Beare Hospice; and for £70.99 during September for The Passage.

Fr Sidon Sagar FDP

Fr Jim writes: *I would like to thank all of you who came to my Farewell Reception last Friday evening. It was a very moving occasion for me and I was overwhelmed by your kindness and love. I am deeply grateful to all those parishioners who contributed so very generously towards my leaving present. Also I would like to thank those who made the evening so successful – Des DeSa and the Parish Council, Clive De Souza, Rob Andrews, the Folk Group, Peter Turner, Shenda Holmes, those who arranged the catering and those who served. It was a great joy to see so many of you - thank you all for such a lovely, memorable evening!*

Offertory Collection. Last week's collection was £1, 882.15 - Envelopes £651.03; Bankers Orders £600.00 (weekly average); Loose Plate £631.12

The Bucket Collection in October is for Ashford Breast Cancer.

Readers. The new rota is now online at <http://parish.rcdow.org.uk/ashford/>

Parish Diaries 2020. New style parish diaries are now available in the repository - £1.99 each.

Masses to celebrate the canonisation of Blessed John Henry Newman at the London Oratory: **Sunday 13th October at 11.00am** - a Solemn Mass of Thanksgiving for the canonisation of St John Henry Newman with *Te Deum*; **Thursday 17th October at 6.30pm** - a Solemn Pontifical Mass in honour of our new saint, celebrated by Cardinal Vincent Nichols. Please see the poster in the narthex.

MANNA Food Bank. Thank you for your continued support of Manna, our local foodbank. The list of required items is updated weekly. Please place your item in the boxes in the narthex.

BeGinning Experience Weekend. A healing weekend for men and women who are separated, divorced or widowed will be held from **18th to 20th October 2019** at the Domus Mariae Centre, Chigwell, Essex. For details please contact Freda 01322-838415 or Maura 01322-551503 or email johnbrotherton@hotmail.co.uk

Healing Mass at Sons of the Divine Providence, 25 Lower Teddington Road, Hampton Wick KT1 4HB on **Saturday 26th October 2019**, 2.00 – 4.00pm. For more details, please see the poster in the narthex or call Fr John Perrotta on 07921 125283.

Ashford Baroque Ensemble Concert on Saturday 26th October 2019, 7.30pm at St Matthew's Church. The programme includes: Telemann - Sinfonia Melodica, Kleinknecht - Trio Sonata for Flute and Oboe in C minor, Handel - Organ Concerto: The Cuckoo and the Nightingale (Soloist: Philip Buckmaster), Bach -Orchestral Suite No.2 in B minor . Programmes £10, under 18s £5, on the door.

Readings for 13th October, 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time
2 Kings 5: 14-17; 2 Timothy 2: 8-13, 13-14; Luke 17: 11-19

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 October since 2012. Robert Attard-Aquilina, Davide Brattesani, James Carroll, Anne Marie Cordery, Patricia Coyer, Mabel Corry, Charles Dillon, Daniel Evans, Lionel Hallowes, Jay Kathan, Liam Little, Paddy McMahon, Pina Mingoia, Marie Nugent, Thomas O'Brien, Kevin Quinn, June Smith, Andrew Stuart, Reg Thomas.

for Fr Reg Dunkling and the parishioners of Teddington; and the Sons of Divine Providence of Hampton Wick in the Upper Thames Deanery.

for the Holy Father's Prayer Intention that the breath of the Holy Spirit may engender a new missionary 'spring' in the Church

Mass Intentions 6th – 13th October

Sunday 6th Vigil Mass Sat, 6.00pm A Special Intention (CH); **9.15am** In thanksgiving; **11.00am** Michael Bentley RIP; **6.00pm** The people of the parish;
Mon 7th 9.15am Alwyn Cooper, Thelma Cooper and Edith Wells RIP;
Tues 8th 9.15am Margaret Hanlon RIP; **Wed 9th 9.15am** Bernadine Dominic RIP;
Fri 11th 9.15am Bernadine Dominic RIP; **Sat 12th 9.15am** Bernadine Dominic RIP;
Sunday 13th Vigil Mass Sat, 6.00pm The people of the parish; **9.15am** Mabel Corry RIP; **11.00am** David Robertson RIP; **6.00pm** Gerard Kennedy RIP

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 and Benediction

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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Website: <http://parish.rcdow.org.uk/ashford>

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

Parish Priest: Fr Sidon Sagar FDP; Assistant Priest: Fr Carlo Mazzotta FDP

Parish Secretary: Mrs Shenda Holmes

Parish Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 10.00am - 1.00pm