

## Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time, 6<sup>th</sup> October 2024

*“Let the little children come to me.”*

Charles Dickens was one of the most famous novelists of all time. If his plots and characters were believable, it was because they were drawn from life. His aim was not just to entertain, but to stir the conscience of Victorian England. Through storytelling, Dickens brought people's personal struggles to the awareness of those who might never have known what it was to be poor or vulnerable. Certain scenes from Dickens' novels still have the power to move. Who could forget the words of Oliver Twist, the hungry orphan bullied into asking for a second bowl of gruel? “Please Sir, I want some more!” he pleads in his childish innocence, a request which Mr Bumble, the workhouse master, considers gross impertinence. Being labelled a rebel sets in motion a downhill spiral for poor little Oliver, and he sinks further and further towards destitution. After a grim period sleeping among the coffins as an apprentice to an undertaker, Oliver meets the Artful Dodger and falls into the hands of a gang of pickpockets. Dickens' message was this: that criminality is not inbred. It is the consequence of society's neglect.

Jesus had been saying the same thing nearly two thousand years before. There were few support networks in ancient Palestine for anyone who fell on hard times. Many did, and women and children were especially vulnerable. Begging, prostitution, or enslavement were the likely fate of children left orphaned, or wives whose husbands abandoned them. People took the view that if you had nothing, you were nothing; worse still, that somehow you deserved it. Jesus grieved for marginalised people. He cured lepers of their disfiguring infections and insisted they be reinstated into the local community. He befriended a hated tax collector. He included several unattached women in his following, such as Mary Magdalene who suffered serious mental illness. The lowest of the low were children. Jesus made a point of pausing to put an arm around them and lay his hands on their heads in blessing. People matter, and they mattered to him. In today's Gospel, we hear him challenge the undisputed right of a husband to cast off his wife. He expresses indignation that his disciples should chase children away. Jesus did more than care. The littlest, the last, and the least might be held up by him as models of discipleship. He pointed out a poor widow in the Temple as an example of generosity; he commended a prostitute for her loving heart. In today's Gospel, he went so far as to say that we need to become like children in our enthusiasm for God and God's ways. Did he mean to say, good children? Those were not his words! Jesus seemed unconcerned whether those who came to him for blessing were well-behaved. What mattered was how much they wanted to be with him.

We can imagine the kind of children the disciples shooed away. There were many street children in Jesus' day, homeless and orphaned, such as one might encounter in the back streets of some cities even today. Any grown-up might consider them a nuisance ... jostling their way to the front of the crowd... stretching out a grubby hand ... calling out ... vying for attention. Was Jesus seriously suggesting that we look to such as these for inspiration? If so, his disciples were surely scandalised! Jesus' teaching still has the power to shock. Though he never encouraged anyone to be selfish or ill-mannered, he nevertheless makes it clear that impeccable conduct is not enough to qualify anyone for the Kingdom of God. **Jesus appeals to the natural child within us all whose deepest desires are incapable of disguise. Do we gaze adoringly on Jesus like the street children of his day? Do we fearlessly call upon his name, beg more of his Spirit, and breathlessly tumble out our needs in prayer? What matters is how hungry we are for God's love; how eagerly we place God at the centre of our lives; how affectionate and trusting we are towards one another. Jesus commends to us, not the conformity of a perfect child, but the natural exuberance of the lovable little**

ones who were bursting to get close to him. No one is ever turned away who holds out an empty heart for God to fill with love... nor is it impertinent to ask for more!

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**Day of Prayer and Fasting.** Pope Francis has called for a day of prayer and fasting for peace on Monday, 7<sup>th</sup> October, the one-year anniversary of the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war. "I ask everyone," he says, "to participate in a day of prayer and fasting for peace in the world." Details click [HERE](#)

**Anne Keane RIP.** The Funeral of Anne Keane will take place at St Michael's on **Monday 7<sup>th</sup> October** at 11.00 am.

**CAFOD Family Fast Day, Friday 4<sup>th</sup> October** –The Annual Collection for CAFOD Fast Day takes place **this weekend**. Please place your donation in the wooden collection box at the back of the church. You will find Gift Aid donation envelopes on the box.

**Baptism Preparation Course.** The next Infant Baptism preparation course is on **Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2024** at 10.00 am in the parish meeting room at St. Michael's. This will be the last course in 2024 so if you require baptism for your child this year please contact [ashfordcatechist@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:ashfordcatechist@rcdow.org.uk)

**First Holy Communion 2025.** Application Forms are now available on the parish website for children in the parish in Year 3 or above (see: *Parish Life* → *Sacramental Preparation* → *First Holy Communion*). The closing date is 31<sup>st</sup> October 2024 @ 11:45 pm. *You will find the Application Form QR code in the Narthex.*

**Monthly Coffees after Sunday 9.15 am Mass.** The next date for coffee is next **Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> October**. Future coffee dates: 3<sup>rd</sup> November (the first Sunday of the month to avoid Remembrance Sunday on the 10<sup>th</sup>) and 8<sup>th</sup> December.

**Parish Pastoral Council.** The minutes from the last meeting are now available on the parish website (see: *Parish Life* → *Parish Pastoral Council*).

**Antiques Fair.** The next Antiques Fair is on **Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> October**, from 10.00 to 3.00 pm in the parish hall. **Please note** that we will not be running a Jumble Sale for DePaul Trust this November, but will run a Bargain Stall and a Tombla Stall at the next Antiques Fair, to raise money for the DePaul Trust. If you have any small items (NOT CLOTHES) that you would like to donate for these stalls, please call Ann Hogan on 01784 254462.

**Mass Intentions.** If you wish to book a Mass, please drop your intention envelope in the box at the back of the church in the offertory collection or through the presbytery letterbox. *Please use the new blue donation envelopes if you can make your Mass offering under Gift Aid.*

**Bucket Collection.** The Bucket Collection is for **COSMIC**, a charity that supports the children's and neonatal intensive care units at St Mary's & Queen Charlotte's Hospital by helping patients and their families, and by enabling our dedicated team of nurses and doctors to treat hundreds of babies and children in intensive care. You will find the donations box in the wall at the back of the church.

One of our young parishioners has benefitted recently from the support of Cosmic. For more information about the charity, please visit <https://cosmiccharity.org.uk/>

**St Michael's School Open Mornings.** If your child is due to start Reception in September 2025, please come along to one of the Open Mornings - Wednesday, 13th November, 9.30-11.30am or Friday, 15th November, 9.30-11.30am

Please find the other details in the School Newsletter, regarding the opening day. Please visit the school website for all the information and forms you will need to apply.  
<https://www.st-michaels.surrey.sch.uk/reception/>

**Mary's Meals** is a charity based, in Argyll, Scotland serving nutritious school meals to children living in some of the world's poorest countries. They have launched a new initiative, asking for donations of leftover foreign currency. You will find donation envelopes in the narthex. Please place your filled envelopes in the box in the narthex. For more information about Mary's Meals, please visit [www.marysmeals.org.uk](http://www.marysmeals.org.uk)

**The Divine Mercy Apostolate, London** is holding a Divine Mercy Retreat at St George's Church, Harrow Road, Sudbury, Wembley, Middlesex, HA0 2QE on **Saturday 26 October** from 1 pm to 4:30 pm. The Retreat will include teachings on the Holy Rosary, Message of Divine Mercy, Holy Mass, Hour of Mercy with Stations of the Cross, Adoration and Benediction and Veneration of the Image of Merciful Jesus. Call Millie on 07957 594646 for more information.

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**This Sunday's readings, 6<sup>th</sup> October, Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time**

*Genesis 2: 18-24; Hebrews 2: 9-11; Mark 10: 2-16*

**Next Sunday's readings, 13<sup>th</sup> October, Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

*Wisdom 7: 7-11; Hebrews 4: 12-13; Mark 10: 17-30*

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**Offertory Collection.** Thank you for your offertories last week:

Loose Plate £565.17; Envelopes £179.00; Standing Orders £900.00

Contactless £196.00 (*The Dona contactless PayPoint is in the narthex*)

**Bucket collection for GUTS: £197.86**

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**MANNA Foodbank.** This week's shortages: Tinned Salmon/Sardines/Mackerel (we have good stocks of Tuna); Tinned Potatoes especially 300g and 400g size; Cereal/Breakfast Bars; Porridge Sachets; Pasta 'n Sauce Pouches (Bachelors or similar); loose Rice (500g); Long-Life cartons of Juice (full size); Large tins of Sweetcorn; Chocolate Spread; Tinned Meat Meals - Chilli, Curry; Cup-a-Soup; Tinned Butter Beans; Bars of Soap; Kitchen Roll; Washing-up-Liquid; Toothpaste; Shaving Foam/Gel; Deodorant for both men and women. Please leave your donations on the Presbytery doorstep or in the Narthex.

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**Safeguarding** If you've any concerns or require advice regarding the safety or well-being of a child or vulnerable adult, please contact our parish safeguarding rep, Tiziana Demurtas on 07778 533932 or [ashfordsg@safeguardrcdow.org.uk](mailto:ashfordsg@safeguardrcdow.org.uk)

You can also contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Team on 020 7798 9356 or [safeguarding@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@rcdow.org.uk)

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## **SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION**

*During Adoration after Saturday morning Mass (and by appointment)*

## **SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM**

*To arrange a baptism please refer to the parish website:*

*(see: Parish Life → Sacramental Preparation → Baptism*

*For the parish Mass timetable, please refer to the parish website:*

**<http://parish.rcdowx.org.uk/ashford>**

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**PLEASE PRAY**

**for all the sick and housebound in our parish.**

**for anniversaries in October since 2017:** Marion Andrews, Davide Brattesani, James Carroll, Anne Marie Cordery, Patricia Coyer, Mabel Corry, Marian Dennehy, George Dunning, Arthur George Holmes, Mary Lee, Liam Little, Violet McKee, Paddy McMahon, Kevin Quinn, Janet Soma, Reg Thomas, Christopher Tobin.

**for Fr Stephen Beale and the parishioners of The Sacred Heart, Teddington; and the Sons of Divine Providence of Hampton Wick in the Upper Thames Deanery.**

**for the Holy Father's Prayer Intention that the church continues to sustain a synodal lifestyle in every way, as a sign of co-responsibility, promoting the participation, communion and mission shared by priests, religious and laity.**

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## **Mass Intentions 6<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> October**

<b>Sun 6<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time</b>	
<b>(Saturday Vigil Mass)</b>	<b>06.00pm</b>	Thelma Cooper and Edith Wells RIP
	<b>09.15am</b>	The people of the parish
	<b>11.30am</b>	Ann Hanrahan RIP
	<b>06.00pm</b>	Bridget Brinkley's intentions
<b>Mon 7<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Our Lady of the Rosary</b>	
	<b>09.15am</b>	Michele Windle RIP
<b>Tues 8<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>09.15am</b>	Lucia Ong RIP
<b>Wed 9<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>St John Henry Newman, Priest</b>	
	<b>06.00pm</b>	Ann Cordery RIP
<b>Fri 11<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>09.15am</b>	Maria Ong Kwee Hwai RIP
<b>Sat 12<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>09.15am</b>	Olaf Lobo RIP
<b>Sun 13<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time</b>	
<b>(Saturday Vigil Mass)</b>	<b>06.00pm</b>	The people of the parish
	<b>09.15am</b>	Mabel Corry RIP
	<b>11.30am</b>	All souls of the Dias Family
	<b>06.00pm</b>	In thanksgiving to St Jude Tadeo

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## **St Michael's Catholic Church**

**112 Clarendon Road, Ashford, Middlesex TW15 2QD**

**Telephone: 01784 252230**

**Email: [ashford@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:ashford@rcdow.org.uk)**

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

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

**Fr Sidon Sagar FDP: Parish Priest, Fr Carlo Mazzotta FDP: Assistant Priest**

**Parish Secretary: Mrs Shenda Holmes**

*Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 9.00 am – 1.00 pm*