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## THE TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (Year A)

6<sup>th</sup> September 2020

Dear Friends,

What a wonderful week this has been! The joy of being able to welcome people back to Church, and to Mass, has meant so much to us. Strictly observing Covid-19 protocols, has meant that everyone both feels and knows that they are safe; as safe as anyone can be. We are using the '2 metre' Rule and have Stewards in place to help folk to get an appropriate space. The Stewards are also involved in leading the Eucharistic Ministers down to the pews for the distribution of Holy Communion, which is given and received in prayerful silence.

A most exquisite moment in the Mass is when the priest holds up the Sacred Host so that all can see and says **'The Body of Christ'** and all present say **'Amen'**.

You can almost 'feel' the prayer of both priest and people ...

That moment will continue in our Masses for some time to come.

What changes in our Liturgy of Mass is the Readings from Sacred Scriptures;

they give us something new to think about each week.

This week the Readings are **from Ezekiel 33:7-9, Romans 13 : 8-10 and from the Gospel of Matthew 18 : 15-20**

### Readings for the Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time 2020

All three Readings are very closely aligned.

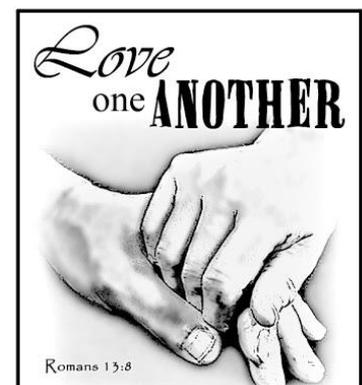
Ezekiel speaks out the message he has heard from God,

*'warn people who you see doing wrong, if you don't you too will share the person's sin. It is up to them whether they listen or not, but at least you have spoken out a warning to them'*. It can be very difficult to speak to someone who is making a wrong choice ...

It is challenging to point out to someone that what they say is incorrect ...

What should we do?

Speak to the person or people involved ... then at least you can say *'I held on to the values by which I believe we are called to live. It is up to them whether they change their ways.'*



St Paul in his Letter to the new Christians in Rome speaks out to tell the people how they should be living unblemished Christian lives ... He says very clearly:

*'Avoid getting into debt, except the debt of mutual love. All our obligations are carried out if we live by that simple phrase. All the commandments of God are respected and embraced **IF** you love your neighbour as yourself, because love is the one thing that cannot hurt your neighbour ...'*

Now we are ready to hear and be challenged by what Jesus says:

*'If someone does something wrong, go and have it out with them alone, between your two selves. If they listen to you, you have won that person back. If they won't listen to you, ask someone who you think they will listen to, to speak to them. If they still refuse to listen, move away from them, don't get involved with them any more.'*

*'Whatever you consider sinful on earth will be considered a sin in heaven. Whatever you consider to be fair and okay on earth will be considered the same in heaven.'*

*Jesus then said: 'I tell you solemnly once again, if two or three of you agree to ask for anything at all, it will be granted by my Father. For where two or three meet in my Name, I shall be there with them.'*

One of God's blessings that comes from the Mass is that we are praying together. Prayer alone is a real adventure and we can pray however we like. In our gathering for Mass, we know that we are supported by the prayer of all those present. In turn, we offer our support so that, whatever others are praying for, I am there with them.



### **What is our prayer?**

Certainly no-one has ever been harmed by prayer ... it is never that anyone is left unforgiven ... It is never to breakdown a person's character ... We can say with all certainty that we never pray for anything negative to happen to anyone.

Remember that age-old saying: 'I wouldn't wish it on my worst enemy'?

That sums up the positive attitude of our prayer.

We pray for the sick and for those close to death ...that they may know God's peace as they face death ... that they experience Christ's healing touch in their sickness ... that they never feel apart from God, or separated from the love of their community.

We pray for our friends and for all those who support us, that nothing bad will ever happen to them ... that they will be rewarded by God for their gifts of generosity and time ...  
That others will be a friend to them in the same way as they are friends to us ...

When people feel supported by a community's prayer, they dare to offer themselves to the community, to help their community. People who quietly volunteer to clean the Church, both for God and for their community. They set the scene for our prayer.

During this time of Covid-19 people have volunteered their services as Stewards, Readers and Eucharistic Ministers.

Yes, to thank God for their health, but also because they feel that they can serve their community in this particular ministry at this particular time ...

Because of the risks associated with Covid-19, we are having to ask our Eucharistic Ministers who are aged 70 or over to step down, to minimise the risk of becoming infected. These people have been so dedicated to Christ Jesus in the Eucharist, we thank them most sincerely for the generous serving they have given.

This means we have 'gaps' in the names of people we call on to cover all that we need. If you could Steward, or see yourself as a reader or Eucharistic Minister, please make yourself known to us. Be assured, we will welcome your offer.

So, we set off from this Mass with a new determination not to get caught up in the kind of gossip that destroys another person's reputation. .

Love, real love, is always tough, but true. Seek the truth before it is too late ...

Enjoy a happy and holy week; trying gently to put forward your Christian Teachings, and furthermore trying not to find yourself neglecting the Teachings of Christ and his Church.

*Fr. Michael*

*Sr. WJP*



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There is something about the nineties this week! ...

With Masses on Sunday and Wednesday, 90 + people received Holy Communion. Please don't get stressed or anxious about Mass We have carried out a Risk Assessment which has been approved.

95 People are now contributing to our Parish by using Standing Orders or Direct Debit, others drop envelopes through the Rectory front door.

An enormous thank you from Fr Michael to each one of you; you are helping to keep the parish just out of debt. A marvellous achievement!



## The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass

Masses this week will be at

\*10.30 a.m. (*prompt*)  
on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> September

\*10.30 a.m. (*prompt*)  
on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> September

also

\*10.30 a.m. (*prompt*)  
on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> September