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

*4th October 2020*

Dear Friends,

Each year we remember on this day that in 1957 Fr Michael arrived at the English College in Rome, a Seminary for training men for the priesthood. A very academic programme was followed, with all Lectures delivered in Latin or Italian – quite a challenge!

On the same day, but some years later in 1979, Sr Liza set off from Wiltshire for Ealing, where she was to begin her training for the Religious Life. A car loaded with a sack of potatoes, a sack of swedes, a sack of sprouts and a tray of eggs filled the back seat. The thinking was that, coming from the country to a town, fresh produce would be a fitting gift.

The difference was that Fr Michael was aged 18, going to the Seminary straight from School. Sr Liza was aged 25 and had held down a responsible career.

Now, on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2020, together we will move into our retirement years. We both hope to be able to continue our ministry, in one way or another, but at a quieter pace. As you know, we are only moving 150 yards, to the other end of the Church grounds, but, over fourteen years here we had accumulated much and packing has been exhausting. We wouldn't have made it except for the help of ten lovely people who have sorted, carried, thrown away and recycled etc.

We have thoroughly enjoyed our time here in St Ignatius Parish, Liturgical Year after Liturgical Year, with always something new to be discovered and thought about ... perhaps especially at our special Reconciliation Services.

The Sacramental Programmes through which we have come to know many families and hopefully have touched the lives of all ages as we have prepared together have brought us great joy always ...

We both have the same outlook about one thing : parish first and foremost.

We each say that the parish community in which we minister is our family.

And, as in all families, we have been richly blessed. We have shared horror, death, suffering, but also joy, happiness, love and stories of success.

We have watched the young grow into teenagers ...  
teenagers leaving School and moving into their new starts ... new parents becoming a little older ...  
and the more senior among us becoming yet more senior ...  
Parish life really is a tapestry of events!

We have built up some lasting friendships which we treasure.  
We want to say 'thank you, for allowing us to share your lives for fourteen happy years;  
you will not be forgotten but kept in our thoughts and conversations and in our prayer.'

**Gentler times!**

As children, when we were invited to a friend's house, it was always drummed into us  
not to forget to say : 'Thank you for having me'.

We're no longer children, but it still seems right to say :

**'Thank you for having us, and for letting us share your journey over the last fourteen years'.**

One person makes it easier for us to retire and that person is, of course, **Fr Christian**.  
Fr Christian will take over the baton we have carried, and he will 'run the race' with you.  
The race is of course to be always prepared for God's Kingdom both here on earth and in heaven.  
Fr Christian has youth on his side and the enthusiasm and drive that comes from this.  
We are sure that he has a vision of the way in which he wants to minister to you all.

**Exciting times!**

Fr Christian is very much looking forward to meeting you all.  
This will, of course, take him longer to achieve  
as Covid-19 continues to reduce the numbers of those who can attend Mass at any one time.

### **SATURDAY EVENING 6.00 p.m. MASSES**

We know that you have been missing these Masses;  
the Saturday evening Mass is the most popular Mass in this parish.  
For the last three Saturdays we have celebrated  
Masses with first Holy Communion for thirty-eight children  
who should have begun receiving Holy Communion in May.  
We have thoroughly enjoyed these Masses with first Eucharist.  
Covid-19 has had the effect of paring both the Mass and the  
Celebration afterwards

to something much less 'cluttered'; something both really beautiful, and meaningful,  
for the whole family. We keep these children and their families in our prayer.



From next weekend 10<sup>th</sup> / 11<sup>th</sup> October, Fr Christian will celebrate a 6.00 p.m. Saturday Mass.

This will allow more people to come to Church for their Mass, and fewer of you having to stand outside!

It will also facilitate the new Communion Children's Liturgy Group.

On that note, all First Eucharist 2020 – 2021 Application Forms should have been returned by now,  
and the List will close on Sunday evening (4<sup>th</sup> October). Thank you.

Now, to this Sunday's Liturgy of the Word, and a comment on the Scriptures ...

[Readings for 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time 2020](#)

In today's Reading from the letter of St Paul to the Philippians, 4 : 9, we read :



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There is no need to worry; but if there is anything you need, pray for it, asking God for it with prayer and thanksgiving, and that peace of God, which is so much greater than we can understand, will guard your hearts and your thoughts, in Christ Jesus.

Finally, brothers, fill your minds with everything that is true, everything that is noble, everything that is good and pure, everything that we love and honour, and everything that can be thought virtuous or worthy of praise.

Keep doing all the things that you learnt from me, and have been taught by me, and have heard or seen that I do.  
Then the God of peace will be with you.



How very reassuring to know that when we are in need, we are not alone.  
We have a God who is always ready to listen.

We are surrounded by a Christian community who should, in God's Name, share Faith with us and care for us and about us.

The potential within each person to be Christ-like can only be achieved if our inner selves and our outer disposition are entirely and exactly the same: filled with peace, prayer, love, an eye for the common good of all people, for this is the mind of God.

We only have to read the lives of the numerous Saints of God to know that this can be achieved. It may take us a lifetime of refining and refining again, but we can achieve our goal. It is a goal set for us by God, in whose image and likeness we are each made.

In the Gospel of Matthew 21:33 – 43

'Listen to another parable' says Jesus. St Matthew records 23 of the parables of Jesus in his Gospel, which explains why we seem to move from parable to parable, when reading his Gospel. Matthew, in recording these parables, obviously believes that we will learn much about God through them. A parable never ends by telling us what we should do – that is left up to us.

Today we have the parable about the wicked husbandmen/tenants



A man takes great care with his plot of land, he plants a vineyard ... he erects a fence ... he builds a tower and digs a winepress ... He has thought of everything.  
Now he must travel abroad, so he hires men who will know how to tend his vineyard in his absence.

We might imagine that all went really well and that the hired men did a good job in tending the vines, so that they produced a really good harvest.

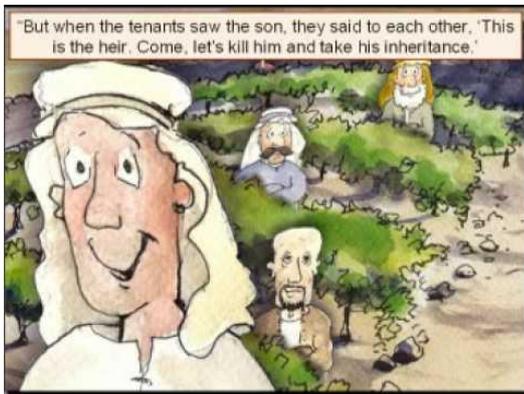
Travel in those days was not undertaken with speed in mind, so the servants knew that the grapes would be harvested under their tenancy.

Like so many people, they allowed themselves to become the focus of their work, rather than focusing on their task on behalf of the Owner.

The Owner is still some way off when he sends his servants to collect the produce of his vineyard. But the three servants were killed by the tenants, who weren't going to part with any of their treasured wine.

So the Owner sends a larger cohort of servants to make his demand, but they too were killed.

The Owner only has one more thing he can do : HE CAN SEND HIS SON. He thought they would respect his son. But the tenants killed the son so that they could take over his inheritance. They seized the son, threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.



Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?' They answered, 'He will bring those wretches to a wretched end and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will deliver the produce to him when the season arrives'.

Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the scriptures: It was the stone rejected by the builders that became the keystone'.

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his was the Lord's doing and it is wonderful to see?  
I tell you, then, that the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit.'

We are each tenants in God's Vineyard, employed to labour there for Him. BUT, if we have either no produce to show, or, are attributing our success to someone other than God, who did all the building, our glory will only be passing.

What a lot the Scriptures with their parables really do teach us!

We need to Examine our Conscience and ask ourselves :  
What is it that I do for which God does not receive the glory?  
What tasks do I take to myself and never thank God for the success that comes at my hands?  
Do I ever thank God for putting me in the right place at the right time so that He can reach out through me?



On the 24 September, we celebrated for the first time the Feast Day of St John Henry Newman. A priest who converted from the Church of England. He spoke of his relationship with God, in prayer as '**heart speaks to heart**' – a most eloquent description.

*“God has created me to do Him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission. I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next. I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons.*

*He has not created me for naught. I shall do good; I shall do His work. I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place, while not intending it if I do but keep His commandments.*

*Therefore, I will trust Him, whatever I am, I can never be thrown away. If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him, in perplexity, my perplexity may serve Him. If I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve Him. He does nothing in vain. He knows what He is about. He may take away my friends. He may throw me among strangers. He may make me feel desolate, make my spirits sink, hide my future from me. Still, He knows what He is about.”*

— John Henry Newman

We promise you our ongoing love and prayer always

*Fr. Michael*

*Sr. Liz*

